















# THE LOVE LETTERS OF BISMARCK

Being Letters to His Fiancée and Wife, 1846-1889

Authorized by Prince Herbert von Bismarck

and Translated from the German

under the Supervision of

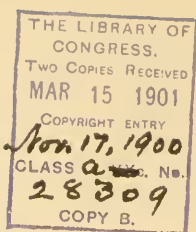
CHARLTON T. LEWIS

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## CONTENTS

	PAGE
LETTERS WRITTEN BEFORE MARRIAGE TO JULY, 1847 . .	3
LETTERS WRITTEN WHILE IN THE PRUSSIAN PARLIA- MENT AND THE FEDERAL DIET, AUGUST, 1847-1858.	113
LETTERS WRITTEN WHILE MINISTER TO ST. PETERSBURG AND PARIS, 1859-1862 . . . . .	313
LETTERS WRITTEN WHILE MINISTER-PRESIDENT AND IM- PERIAL CHANCELLOR, 1863-1888 . . . . .	381



## ILLUSTRATIONS

PRINCE BISMARCK—1860 . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
JOHANNA VON PUTTKAMER—1847 . . . . .	<i>Facing page</i> 16
PRINCESS BISMARCK . . . . .	" 60
PRINCESS BISMARCK—1855 . . . . .	" 100
PRINCESS BISMARCK—1871 . . . . .	" 140
BILL, MARY, AND HERBERT VON BISMARCK . . .	" 200
PRINCESS BISMARCK—1873 . . . . .	" 250
COUNTESS MARIE, PRINCESS BISMARCK, PRINCE BISMARCK . . . . .	" 300
PRINCESS BISMARCK—1885 . . . . .	" 350
PRINCE BISMARCK . . . . .	" 376
PRINCESS BISMARCK . . . . .	" 400





II

LETTERS WRITTEN BEFORE MARRIAGE  
TO JULY 1847







PRINCE BISMARCK

1860



# THE LOVE LETTERS OF BISMARCK

P. A. TRUCHOT.

Hôtel de Prusse, Stettin.

(Not dated : written about the end of December, 1846.)

*To Herr von Puttkamer :*

MOST HONORED SIR,—I begin this communication by indicating its content in the first sentence—it is a request for the highest thing you can dispose of in this world, the hand of your daughter. I do not conceal from myself the fact that I appear presumptuous when I, whom you have come to know only recently and through a few meetings, claim the strongest proof of confidence which you can give to any man. I know, however, that even irrespective of all obstacles in space and time which can increase your difficulty in forming an opinion of me, through my own efforts I can never be in a position to give you such guarantees for the future that they would, from your point of view, justify intrusting me with an object so precious, unless you supplement by trust in God that which trust in human beings cannot supply. All that I can do is to give you information about myself with absolute candor, so far as I have come to understand myself. It will be easy for

you to get reports from others in regard to my public conduct; I content myself, therefore, with an account of what underlay that—my inner life, and especially my relations to Christianity. To do that I must take a start far back.

In earliest childhood I was estranged from my parents' house, and at no time became entirely at home there again; and my education from the beginning was conducted on the assumption that everything is subordinate to the cultivation of the intelligence and the early acquisition of positive sciences. After a course of religious teaching, irregularly attended and not comprehended, I had at the time of my confirmation by Schleiermacher, on my sixteenth birthday, no belief other than a bare deism, which was not long free from pantheistic elements. It was at about this time that I, not through indifference, but after mature consideration, ceased to pray every evening, as I had been in the habit of doing since childhood; because prayer seemed inconsistent with my view of God's nature; saying to myself, either God himself, being omnipresent, is the cause of everything—even of every thought and volition of mine—and so in a sense offers prayers to himself through me, or, if my will is independent of God's will, it implies arrogance and a doubt as to the inflexibility as well as the perfection of the divine determination to believe that it can be influenced by human appeals. When not quite seventeen years old I went to Göttingen University. During the next eight years I seldom saw the home of my parents; my father indulgently refrained from interference; my mother censured me from far away when I neglected my studies and professional work, probably in the conviction that she must leave the rest to guidance from above: with this exception I was literally cut off from the counsel and instruction of others. In this period, when studies which

ambition at times led me to prosecute zealously—or emptiness and satiety, the inevitable companions of my way of living—brought me nearer to the real meaning of life and eternity, it was in old-world philosophies, uncomprehended writings of Hegel, and particularly in Spinoza's seeming mathematical clearness, that I sought for peace of mind in that which the human understanding cannot comprehend. But it was loneliness that first led me to reflect on these things persistently, when I went to Kniephof, after my mother's death, five or six years ago. Though at first my views did not materially change at Kniephof, yet conscience began to be more audible in the solitude, and to represent that many a thing was wrong which I had before regarded as permissible. Yet my struggle for insight was still confined to the circle of the understanding, and led me, while reading such writings as those of Strauss, Feuerbach, and Bruno Bauer, only deeper into the blind alley of doubt.

I was firmly convinced that God has denied to man the possibility of true knowledge; that it is presumption to claim to understand the will and plans of the Lord of the World; that the individual must await in submission the judgment that his Creator will pass upon him in death, and that the will of God becomes known to us on earth solely through conscience, which He has given us as a special organ for feeling our way through the gloom of the world. That I found no peace in these views I need not say. Many an hour have I spent in disconsolate depression, thinking that my existence and that of others is purposeless and unprofitable—perchance only a casual product of creation, coming and going like dust from rolling wheels.

About four years ago I came into close companionship,

for the first time since my school-days, with Moritz Blankenburg, and found in him, what I had never had till then in my life, a friend; but the warm zeal of his love strove in vain to give me by persuasion and discussion what I lacked—faith. But through Moritz I made acquaintance with the Triglaf family and the social circle around it, and found in it people who made me ashamed that, with the scanty light of my understanding, I had undertaken to investigate things which such superior intellects accepted as true and holy with childlike trust. I saw that the members of this circle were, in their outward life, almost perfect models of what I wished to be. That confidence and peace dwelt in them did not surprise me, for I had never doubted that these were companions of belief; but belief cannot be had for the asking, and I thought I must wait submissively to see whether it would come to me. I soon felt at home in that circle, and was conscious of a satisfaction that I had not before experienced—a family life that included me, almost a home.

I was meanwhile brought into contact with certain events in which I was not an active participant, and which, as other people's secrets, I cannot communicate to you, but which stirred me deeply. Their practical result was that the consciousness of the shallowness and worthlessness of my aim in life became more vivid than ever. Through the advice of others, and through my own impulse, I was brought to the point of reading the Scriptures more consecutively and with resolute restraint, sometimes, of my own judgment. That which stirred within me came to life when the news of the fatal illness of our late friend in Cardemin tore the first ardent prayer from my heart, without subtle questionings as to its reasonableness. God did not grant my prayer on that occasion; neither did He



utterly reject it, for I have never again lost the capacity to bring my requests to Him, and I feel within me, if not peace, at least confidence and courage such as I never knew before.

I do not know what value you will attach to this emotion, which my heart has felt for only two months; I only hope that it may not be lost, whatever your decision in regard to me may be—a hope of which I could give you no better assurance than by undeviating frankness and loyalty in that which I have now disclosed to you, and to no one else hitherto, with the conviction that God favors the sincere.

I refrain from any assurance of my feelings and purposes with reference to your daughter, for the step I am taking speaks of them louder and more eloquently than words can. So, too, no promises for the future would be of service to you, since you know the untrustworthiness of the human heart better than I, and the only security I offer for the welfare of your daughter lies in my prayer for God's blessing. As a matter of history I would only observe that, after I had seen Fräulein Johanna repeatedly in Cardemin, after the trip we made together this summer, I have only been in doubt as to whether the attainment of my desires would be reconcilable with the happiness and peace of your daughter, and whether my self-confidence was not greater than my ability when I believed that she could find in me what she would have a right to look for in her husband. Very recently, however, together with my reliance on God's grace, the resolution which I now carry out has also become fixed in me, and I kept silent when I saw you in Zimmerhausen only because I had more to say than I could express in conversation. In view of the importance of the matter and the great sacrifice which it will involve for you and your wife in separation from your

daughter, I can scarcely hope that you will give a favorable decision at once, and only beg that you will not refuse me an opportunity for explanation upon any considerations which might dispose you to reject my suit, before you utter a positive refusal.

There is doubtless a great deal that I have not said, or not said fully enough, in this letter, and I am, of course, ready to give you exact and faithful information as to everything you may desire to know; I think I have told what is most important.

I beg you to convey to your wife my respectful compliments, and to accept kindly the assurance of my love and esteem.

BISMARCK.

Address: Schönhausen, near Fischbek-on-the-Elbe.

SCHÖNHAUSEN, *January 4, 1847.*

*To Herr von Puttkamer:*

MOST HONORED SIR,—My cordial thanks for your letter of the 28th, which I received day before yesterday. Although it leaves your decision still in doubt, yet I gather from it permission to visit you in Reinfeld—a permission of which I should have availed myself immediately if I had not been restrained for the moment by official duties. I passed yesterday in an inward conflict whether I might go or not. But leaving out of account the fact that my predecessor in the office of dike-captain was deposed at my instance on account of official misconduct, and that I must find in this circumstance an additional incentive to the conscientious discharge of my duty, I should not be able to leave here before the end of this week without violating my oath of office. I shall accordingly take the express that leaves Stettin on Monday, the 11th inst., unless

you write me at Stettin, general delivery, that my visit for the present would be untimely. As I compute, I shall thus arrive in Reinfeld towards evening on Tuesday. But should a genuine thaw set in before that time, and the Elbe rise, I shall be tied to my post here as sentinel. Having no deputy, I cannot leave it in that event under any conditions. Of course I should then send you word immediately.

You ask me, most honored Herr von Puttkamer, whether "my feet are firmly established." I can reply only with an affirmative answer to your next question—that I am fixedly and manfully determined to seek peace with every man, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. That my footsteps are as sure as I could wish them to be, I dare not assert; I regard myself, rather, as a cripple who will stumble, but whom the grace of the Lord will uphold. At present I can add nothing to my confession, as I uttered it in my previous letter; the less so because, in the wish to make the information I give in every point satisfactory to you, unavoidably a suspicion must needs suggest itself that I might unconsciously become untruthful to you and to myself. When I was writing the previous letter I called upon God to help me to clearness in searching my inner man, so that no untrue word should flow from my pen, and what I wrote there is my open confession before everybody, of which I make no secret, and, to that extent, at least, it is a sure and straightforward step.

Accept once more my heartfelt thanks for your letter, of which I am the more sensible the more I try to imagine myself in the position of a father whose only child a comparative stranger seeks in marriage. A week hence I hope I shall have travelled half the distance to Reinfeld.

It is, I think, the first time that I have wished for cold weather, and certainly the first that I have asked the dear Lord to send it—a prayer, however, at which my heart sinks when I bethink me how many prayers of the poor ask the contrary. My most respectful compliments to your wife.

BISMARCK.

JERICHOW, Friday, *January 29, '47.*

*To Fräulein von Puttkamer, Reinfeld, near Zuckers, Hinterpommern:*

ANGELA MIA,—I arrived here safely, have patrolled everything, and convinced myself to my sorrow that I have come too soon, as usual. The ice on the Elbe is still firm, and everything is in the best order. I seize a half-hour of leisure, in a very bad tavern, to write you on very bad paper, if only a few words. I caught a hasty glimpse of my brother and Malvine, and found them both delighted with the change that has taken place in me. Last evening in Berlin I called on Bernhard\* without finding him at home, and thus convinced myself, to my horror, that, besides the famous sausages, I had also mislaid your aunt's letters from Versin, and I haven't the faintest idea where they are. If they were left in Reinfeld by any chance, do send them immediately. I left a note for Bernhard, explaining what a bad messenger I am, and I fancy your aunt will have no further use for me in that capacity.

As soon as the floods (which, for that matter, have not yet arrived) are over, I shall fly again northwards, to look up the flower of the wilderness, as my cousin puts it. As soon as I am quiet in Schönhausen I shall write

\* B. v. Puttkamer-Versin.

you more in detail; for the present only this token of life and love, for the horses stamp, neigh, and rear at the door, and I have still much to do to-day. Most cordial remembrances to your—or, *j'ose dire*, our—parents. *Sans phrase*, yours from top to toe. Kisses cannot be written. Farewell.

BISMARCK.

SCHÖNHAUSEN, *February 1, '47.*

I had only waited for daylight to write you, my dear heart, and with the light came your little green spirit-lamp to make my lukewarm water seethe—though this time it found it ready to boil over. Your pity for my restless nights at present is premature, but I shall give you credit for it. The Elbe still lies turbid and growling in her ice-bonds: the spring's summons to burst them is not yet loud enough for her. I say to the weather: "If you would only be cold or warm! But you stay continually at freezing-point, and at this rate the matter may long drag on." For the present my activity is limited to sending out, far and wide, from the warm seat at the writing-table, diverse conjurations, whose magic starts quantities of fascines, boards, wheelbarrows, etc., from inland towards the Elbe, perchance to serve as a prosaic dam in restraint of the poetical foaming of the flood. After I had spent the morning in this useful rather than agreeable correspondence, my resolve was to chat away comfortably through the evening with you, beloved one, as though we were sitting on the sofa in the red drawing-room; and with sympathetic attention to my desire the mail kept for my enjoyment precisely at this gossiping hour your letter, which I should have received by good rights day before yesterday. You know, if you were able

to decipher my inexcusably scrawled note\* from Schlawe, how I struck a half-drunken crowd of hussar officers there, who disturbed me in my writing. In the train I had, with my usual bad luck, a lady *vis-à-vis*, and beside me two very stout, heavily fur-clad passengers, the nearer of whom was a direct descendant of Abraham into the bargain, and put me in a bitter humor against all his race by a disagreeable movement of his left elbow.

I found my brother in his dressing-gown, and he employed the five minutes of our interview very completely, according to his habit, in emptying a woolsack full of vexatious news about Kniephof before me: disorderly inspectors, a lot of damaged sheep, distillers drunk every day, thoroughbred colts (the prettiest, of course) come to grief, and rotten potatoes, fell in a rolling torrent from his obligingly opened mouth upon my somewhat travel-worn self. On my brother's account I must affect and utter some exclamations of terror and complaint, for my indifferent manner on receiving news of misfortune vexes him, and as long as I do not express surprise he has ever new and still worse news in stock. This time he attained his object, at least in my inner man, and when I took my seat next to the Jewish elbow in green fur I was in a right bad humor; especially the colt distressed me—an animal as pretty as a picture and three years old. Not before getting out of doors did I become conscious of the ingratitude of my heart, and the thought of the unmerited happiness that had become mine a fortnight earlier again won the mastery in me. In Stettin I found drinking, gambling friends. William Ramin took occasion to say, *à propos* of a remark about reading the Bible, "Tut! In Reinfeld

\* This note has been lost.



I'd speak like that, too, if I were in your place, but to believe you can impose on your oldest acquaintances is amusing." I found my sister very well and full of joy about you and me. She wrote to you, I think, before she received your letter. Arnim is full of anxiety lest I become "pious." He kept looking at me all the time earnestly and thoughtfully, with sympathetic concern, as one looks at a dear friend whom one would like to save and yet almost gives up for lost. I have seldom seen him so tender. Very clever people have a curious manner of viewing the world. In the evening (I hope you did not write so late) I drank your health in the foaming grape-juice of Sillery, in company with half a dozen Silesian counts, Schaffgotsch and others, at the Hôtel de Rome, and convinced myself Friday morning that the ice on the Elbe was still strong enough to bear my horse's weight, and that, so far as the freshet was concerned, I might to-day be still at your blue or black side\* if other current official engagements had not also claimed my presence. Snow has fallen very industriously all day long, and the country is white once more, without severe cold. When I arrived it was all free from snow on this side of Brandenburg; the air was warm and the people were ploughing; it was as though I had travelled out of winter into opening spring, and yet within me the short springtime had changed to winter, for the nearer I came to Schönhausen the more oppressive I found the thought of entering upon the old loneliness once more, for who knows how long. Pictures of a wasted past arose in me as though they would banish me from you. I was on the verge of tears, as when, after a school vacation, I caught sight of Berlin's towers from the train. The

\* In subsequent letters he speaks of her "blue-gray-black eyes."

comparison of my situation with that in which I was on the 10th, when I travelled the same line in the opposite direction; the conviction that my solitude was, strictly speaking, voluntary, and that I could at any time, albeit through a resolve smacking of insubordination and a forty hours' journey, put an end to it, made me see once more that my heart is ungrateful, dismayed, and resentful; for soon I said to myself, in the comfortable fashion of the accepted lover, that even here I am no longer lonely, and I was happy in the consciousness of being loved by you, my angel, and, in return for the gift of your love, of belonging to you, not merely in vassalage, but with my inmost heart. On reaching the village I felt more distinctly than ever before what a beautiful thing it is to have a home—a home with which one is identified by birth, memory, and love. The sun shone bright on the stately houses of the villagers, and their portly inmates in long coats and the gayly dressed women in short skirts gave me a much more friendly greeting than usual; on every face there seemed to be a wish for my happiness, which I invariably converted into thanks to you. Gray-haired Bellin's\* fat face wore a broad smile, and the trusty old soul shed tears as he patted me paternally on the back and expressed his satisfaction; his wife, of course, wept most violently; even Odin was more demonstrative than usual, and his paw on my coat-collar proved incontestably that it was muddy weather. Half an hour later Miss Breeze was galloping with me on the Elbe, manifestly proud to carry your affianced, for never before did she so scornfully smite the earth with her hoof. Fortunately you cannot judge, my heart, in what a mood of dreary

\* Inspector at Schönhausen.



dulness I used to re-enter my house after a journey ; what depression overmastered me when the door of my room yawned at me and the mute furniture in the silent apartments confronted me, bored like myself. The emptiness of my existence was never clearer to me than in such moments, until I seized a book—though none of them was sad enough for me—or mechanically engaged in any routine work. My preference was to come home at night, so that I could go to sleep immediately.\* Ach, Gott!—and now? What a different view I take of everything—not merely that which concerns you as well, and because it concerns you, or will concern you also (although I have been bothering myself for two days with the question where your writing-desk shall stand), but my whole view of life is a new one, and I am cheerful and interested even in my work on the dike and police matters. This change, this new life, I owe, next to God, to you, *ma très chère, mon adorée Jeanneton*—to you who do not heat me occasionally, like an alcohol flame, but work in my heart like warming fire. Some one is knocking.

Visit from the co-director, who complains of the people who will not pay their school taxes. The man asks me whether my *fiancée* is tall.

“Oh yes; rather.”

“Well, an acquaintance of mine saw you last summer with several ladies in the Harz Mountains, and you preferred to converse with the tallest, that must have been your *fiancée*.”

The tallest woman in your party was, I fancy, Frau von Mittelstädt. . . . The Harz! The Harz!

\* Compare the enclosure, in which I used often to find the expression of my inmost thought. Now, never any more. (Enclosed was a copy of Byron's poem, “To Inez.”)

After a thorough consultation with Frau Bellin, I have decided to make no special changes here for the present, but to wait until we can hear the wishes of the lady of the house in the matter, so that we may have nothing to be sorry for. In six months I hope we shall know what we have to do.

It is impossible as yet to say anything definite about our next meeting. Just now it is raining; if that continues the Elbe may be played out in a week or two, and then. . . . Still no news whatever about the Landtag. Most cordial greetings and assurances of my love to your parents, and the former—the latter, too, if you like—to all your cousins, women friends, etc. What have you done with Annchen? \* My forgetting the Versin letters disturbs me; I did not mean to make such a bad job of it. Have they been found? Farewell, my treasure, my heart, consolation of my eyes.

Your faithful      BISMARCK.

Another picture, a description of a storm in the Alps, which catches my eye as I turn over the pages of the book, and pleases me much:

“The sky is changed, and such a change! O night,  
And storm, and darkness, ye are wondrous strong,  
Yet lovely in your strength, as is the light  
Of a dark eye in woman! Far along  
From peak to peak, the rattling crags among,  
Leaps the live thunder; not from one lone cloud,  
But every mountain now has found a tongue,  
And Jura answers through her misty shroud—  
Back to the joyous Alps, who call to her aloud.

\* Fräulein von Blumenthal, afterwards Frau von Böhn.



JOHANNA VON PUTTKAMER

1847



And this is in the night:—most glorious night!  
 Thou wert not sent for slumber! let me be  
 A sharer in thy fierce and fair delight—  
 A portion of the tempest and of thee!  
 How the lit lake shines, a phosphoric sea,  
 And the big rain comes dancing to the earth!  
 And now again 'tis black, and now the glee  
 Of the loud hills shakes with its mountain-mirth,  
 As if they did rejoice o'er a young earthquake's birth."

On such a night the suggestion comes uncommonly near to me that I wish to be a *sharer in the delight, a portion of tempest, of night*;\* mounted on a runaway horse, to dash down the cliffs into the falls of the Rhine, or something similar. A pleasure of that kind, unfortunately, one can enjoy but once in this life. There is something intoxicating in nocturnal storms. Your nights, dearest, I hope you regard, however, as *sent for slumber, not for writing*.<sup>\*</sup> I see with regret that I write English still more illegibly than German. Once more, farewell, my heart. To-morrow noon I am invited to be the guest of Frau Brauchitsch, presumably so that I may be duly and thoroughly questioned about you and yours. I'll tell them as much as I please. *Je t'embrasse mille fois.*

Your own

B.

SCHÖNHAUSEN, *February 7, '47.*

MY HEART,—Just returned through a wild, drifting snow-storm from an appointment (which unfortunately was occasioned by the burning out of a poor family). I have warmed myself at your dear letter; in the twilight,

\* English in the original.

even, I recognized your "Right honorable." All my limbs are twitching with eagerness to be off to Berlin again to-day, and to characterize the dikes and floods in terms of the unutterable Poberow\* dialect. The inexorable thermometer stands at 2 below freezing-point, accompanied with howling wind and large flakes, as though it would soon rain. What is duty? Compare Falstaff's expressions touching honor. At any rate, I shall write you straightway, even if I ruin myself in postage, and no sensible thoughts find their way through the débris of the fire that still has possession of my imagination. After reading your last remark I have just lit my cigar and stirred the ink. First, like a business-man, to answer your letter. I begin with a request smacking of the official desk—namely, that when you write you will, if you please, expressly state what letters you have received from me, giving their dates; otherwise one is uncertain as to the regular forwarding of them, as I am in doubt whether you have received my first letter, which I wrote the day of my arrival here, while on a business trip, in Jerichow, if I mistake not, on very bad paper, Friday, the 29th of January. I am very thankful that you do not write in the evening, my love, even if I am myself to suffer thereby. Every future glance into your gray-blue-black eye with its large pupil will compensate me for possibly delayed or shortened letters.

If I could only dream of you when you do of me! But recently I do not dream at all—shockingly healthy and prosaic; or does my soul fly to Reinfeld in the night and associate with yours? In that case it can certainly not dream here; but it ought to tell about its journey in the

\* Von Puttkamer-Poberow.

morning, whereas the wayward thing is as silent about its nocturnal employments as though it, too, slept like a badger.

Your reminder of the bore, Fritz, with the letter-pouch transports me to Reinfeld and makes me long still more eagerly for the time when I can once again hug my black Jeannette for my good-morning at the desk. About the letter with the strange address, *evidently* in a woman's hand, I should like to tell you a romantic story, but I must destroy every illusion with the explanation that it comes from a man who used to be a friend of mine, who, if I do not mistake, once in Kniephof took a copy of an Italian address that I received. Again a curtain behind which one fancies there is all the poetry in the world, and finds the flattest prose. (I once saw in Aix-la-Chapelle, while strolling about the stage, the Princess of Eboli, after I had just spent my sympathy upon her as she lay overwhelmed and fainting at the queen's feet in one of the scenes, eating bread and butter and cracking bad jokes behind the scenes.) That cousin Woedtke is fond of me, and that the Versin sausage and letter affair is all right, I am glad to learn.

I need not assure you that I have the most heartfelt sympathy for the sufferings of your good mother; I hope rest and summer will affect her health favorably, and that she will recover after a while, with the joy of seeing her children happy. When she is here she shall not have any steps to go up to reach you, and shall live directly next to you.

Why do you wear mournful black in dress and heart, my angel? Cultivate the green of hope that to-day made right joyous revelry in me at sight of its external image, when the gardener placed the first messengers of spring,



hyacinths and crocus, on my window-ledge. *Et dis moi donc, pourquoi es-tu paresseuse? Pourquoi ne fais-tu pas de musique?* I fancied you playing *c-dur* when the hollow, melting wind howls through the dry twigs of the lindens, and *d-moll* when the snow-flakes chase in fantastic whirls around the corners of the old tower, and, after their desperation is spent, cover the graves with their winding-sheet. Oh, were I but Keudell, I'd play now all day long, and the tones would bear me over the Oder, Rega, Persante, Wipper—I know not whither. *Apropos de paresse*, I am going to permit myself to make one more request of you, but with a preface. When I ask you for anything I add (do not take it for blasphemy or mockery) thy will be done—*your* will, I mean; and I do not love you less, nor am I vexed with you for a second if you do not fulfil my request. I love you as you are, and as you choose to be. After I have, by way of preface, said so much with inmost, unadorned truth, without hypocrisy or flattery, I beg you to pay some attention to French—not much, but somewhat—by reading French things that interest you, and, what is not clear to you, make it clear with the dictionary. If it bores you, stop it; but lest it bore you, try it with books that interest you, whatever they may be—romances or anything else. I do not know your mother's views on such reading, but in my opinion there is nothing that you cannot read to yourself. I do not ask this for my own sake, for we will understand each other in our mother tongue, but in your intercourse with the world you will not seldom find occasions when it will be disagreeable or even mortifying if you are unfamiliar with French. I do not know, indeed, to what degree this is true of you, but reading is in any case a way to keep what you have and to acquire more. If it pleases you,



we shall find a way for you to become more fluent in talking, too, than, as you say, you are now. If you do not like it, rely with entire confidence on the preface to my request.

I wrote to poor Moritz yesterday, and, after reading your description of his sadness, my letter lies like a stone on my conscience, for, like a heartless egotist, I mocked his pain by describing my happiness, and in five pages did not refer to his mourning by even a syllable, speaking of myself again and again, and using him as father-confessor. He is an awkward comforter who does not himself feel pain sympathetically, or not vividly enough. My first grief was the passionate, selfish one at the loss I had sustained; for Marie,\* so far as she is concerned, I do not feel it, because I know that she is well provided for, but that my sympathy with the suffering of my warmest friend, to whom I owe eternal thanks, is not strong enough to produce a word of comfort, of strong consolation from overflowing feeling, that burdens me sorely. Weep not, my angel; let your sympathy be strong and full of confidence in God; give him real consolation with encouragement, not with tears, and, if you can, doubly, for yourself and for your thankless friend whose heart is just now filled with you and has room for nothing else. Are you a withered leaf, a faded garment? I will see whether my love can foster the verdure once more, can brighten up the colors. You must put forth fresh leaves, and the old ones I shall lay between the pages of the book of my heart so that we may find them when we read there, as tokens of fond recollection. You have fanned to life again the coal that under ashes and débris still glowed in me; it shall envelop you in life-giving flames.

\* Frau von Blanckenburg.

*Le souper est servi*, the evening is gone, and I have done nothing but chat with you and smoke: is that not becoming employment for the dike-captain? Why not?

A mysterious letter from —— lies before me. He writes in a tone new for him; admits that he perceives that he did many a wrong to his first wife; did not always rightly guide and bear with her weakness; was no prop to the “child,” and believes himself absolved by this severe castigation. *Qu’est ce qu’il me chante?* Has the letter undergone transformation in the Christian climate of Rein-feld, or did it leave the hand of this once shallow buffoon in its present form? He asserts, moreover, that he lives in happiness never dreamed of with his present wife, whose acquaintance he made a week before the engagement, and whom he married six weeks after the same event: a happiness which his first marriage has taught him rightly to prize. Do you know the story of the French tiler who falls from the roof, and, in passing the second story, cries out, “*Ça va bien, pourvu que ça dure?*” Think, only, if we had been betrothed on the 12th of October, ’44, and, on November 23d, had married: What anxiety for mamma!

The English poems of mortal misery trouble me no more now; that was of old, when I looked out into nothing—cold and stiff, snow-drifts in my heart. Now a black cat plays with it in the sunshine, as though with a rolling skein, and I like to see its rolling. I will give you, at the end of this letter, a few more verses belonging to that period, of which fragmentary copies are still preserved, as I see, in my portfolio. You may allow me to read them still; they harm me no more. *Thine eyes have still (and will always have) a charm for me.\** Please write me in your

\* English in the original.

next letter about the uncertain marriage-plans. I believe, by *Jove!*\* that the matter is becoming serious. Until the day is fixed, it still seems to me as though we had been dreaming; or have I really passed a fortnight in Rein-feld, and held you in these arms of mine? Has Finette been found again? Do you remember our conversation when we went out with her in leash—when you, little rogue, said you would have “given me the mitten” had not God taken pity on me and permitted me at least a peep through the keyhole of His door of mercy? That came into my mind when I was reading I. Cor. vii. 13 and 14 yesterday. A commentator says of the passage that, in all relations of life, Christ regards the kingdom of God as the more powerful, victorious, finally overcoming all opposition, and the kingdom of darkness as powerless, falling in ruins ever more and more. Yet, how do most of you have so little confidence in your faith, and wrap it carefully in the cotton of isolation, lest it take cold from any draught of the world; while others are vexed with you, and proclaim that you are people who esteem yourselves too holy to come into contact with publicans, etc. If every one should think so who believes he has found truth—and many serious, upright, humble seekers do believe they find it elsewhere, or in another form—what a Pennsylvania solitary-confinement prison would God’s beautiful earth become, divided up into thousands and thousands of exclusive co-teries by insuperable partitions! Compare, also, Rom. xiv. 22 and xv. 2; also, particularly, I. Cor. iv. 5; viii. 2; ix. 20; also xii. 4 and the following; further, xiii. 2; all in the First Ep. to the Cor., which seems to me to apply to the subject. We talked, during that walk, or another

\* English in the original.

one, a great deal about "the sanctity of doing good works." I will not inundate you with Scripture passages in this connection, but only tell you how splendid I find the Epistle of James. (Matt. xxv. 34 and following; Rom. ii. 6; II. Cor. v. 10; Rom. ii. 13; I. Epistle of John iii. 7, and countless others.) It is, indeed, unprofitable to base arguments upon separate passages of Scripture apart from their connection; but there are many who are honestly striving, and who attach more importance to passages like James ii. 14 than to Mark xvi. 16, and for the latter passage offer expositions, holding them to be correct, which do not literally agree with yours. To what interpretation does the word "faith" not lend itself, both when taken alone and in connection with that which the Scriptures command us "to believe," in every single instance where they employ the word! Against my will, I fall into spiritual discussion and controversies. Among Catholics the Bible is read not at all, or with great precaution, by the laity; it is expounded only by the priests, who have concerned themselves all their lives with the study of the original sources. In the end, all depends upon the interpretation. Concert in Bütow amuses me: the idea of Bütow is, to my mind, the opposite of all music.

I have been quite garrulous, have I not? Now I must disturb some document-dust, and sharpen my pen afresh to the police-official style, for the president of the provincial court and the government. Could I but enclose myself herewith, or go along in a salmon-basket as mail-matter! Till we meet again, *dearest black one*.\* I love you, *c'est tout dire*.

BISMARCK.

\* English in the original.

(I am forgetting the English verses):

“Sad dreams, as when the spirit of our youth  
Returns in sleep, sparkling with all the truth  
And innocence, once ours, and leads us back  
In mournful mockery over the shining track  
Of our young life, and points out every ray  
Of hope and peace we’ve lost upon the way!”

By Moore, I think; perhaps Byron.

“To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow  
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,  
To the last syllable of recorded time;  
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools  
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!  
Life’s but a walking shadow, a poor player  
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,  
And then is heard no more: it is a tale  
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,  
Signifying nothing.”

Cordial remembrances to your parents and the Redden-  
tin folk.

SCHÖNHAUSEN, *February 13, 1847.*

GIOVANNA MIA,— . . . A tiresome day this has been for me, as the provincial counsellor Alvensleben and his secretary were with me on business from morning till mid-day; but as I found myself bored, that was precisely the right mood for putting in order heaps of papers that have come from Kniephof. Among many a dear letter, many a sad or gay reminder of the past, I found

two things which I send you, that you may look through them, if they interest you, as contributions to the history of your future life-companion. One of them is a letter\* of my Carlsburg cousin,† Caroline's‡ mother, which she wrote to me when I, then in Potsdam, wanted to take leave of the service. Of my answer I sent my father at his request an extract, which I find again here. I was then twenty-three years old (delightful age: still a lot of illusions). I was afterwards at times sorry that I did retire then, and two years ago I even made the attempt to take a fresh start towards a ministerial post, but rather from *ennui* than from an inward call. On the whole, the way that God has led me will prove to have been the best for me, and in the main I endorse my views of that day, in reference to the *misère* of our national service, even now. Only I have through experience got rid of my self-deception in regard to the Arcadian happiness of a country-landlord incarnate, with his double-entry book-keeping and chemical studies. Over this occupation there lay at that time for me still the beautiful blue mist of distant mountains. Sometimes even now, when one of my fellow-students achieves a rapid success in his career, I am sensible of some mortification in the thought, "I also might have had that," but the conviction then always resumes its sway in me that a person seeks happiness in vain so long as he seeks it outside of himself. (I look upon ourselves in this as one person, and "in you" is not "outside of myself.") I offered my brother the Pomeranian estates at that time for 150,000 thaler, but he would not take them at that price; now in the division we have reckoned them at 200,000, and even that is cheap, for Kniephof alone,

\* Not extant.

† Countess Bismarck-Bohlen.

‡ Frau von Malortin, *née* Bismarck-Bohlen.



which is put at 60,000 in this estimate, is worth between 80,000 and 90,000. We have, indeed, spent 20,000 thaler more on it since that time; surely enough, by God's blessing, if we are sensible, to enable us to do good to many people. How many a government counsellor lives in town in elegant fashion with wife and child on a salary of 1000 thaler, or a little more, and must pay in cash for the things that we have here for nothing — dwelling, wood, light, food and maintenance, for himself, his people, and horses, if he has any. And yet *l'homme propose, Dieu dispose*. Who can look into the future? Who can tell whether anxiety and need may not press close upon us also one day? The richest may have to turn his back upon his homestead. In that event we shall be satisfied if we only have each other and trust in God—through joy and sorrow, through glory and shame. Remember me in the kindest manner to your parents, and may God guard you—my star, for whom my heart is ever sick with longing. Farewell, dearest, and make me a visit by letter soon: I look forward to the arrival of the mail with impatience every day.

B.

GREIFSWALD, September 29, 1838.\*

*To the Captain of Horse and Knight, etc., Herr von Bismarck, Right Honorable, Berlin, Unter den Linden, No. 5 (al. Bellevue Strasse, 22).*

DEAR FATHER,—Theodore† will have told you that he left me here well and cheerful, and I most sincerely hope that he found you in the same condition, and that mother's health has improved as much as the last news I had of her

\* Compare page 26.

† Count Bismarck-Bohlen.

at Lienchen's permitted me to hope. I am certainly not the man to reproach others about letter-writing, but yet I cannot conceal the fact that, just at this moment, when the doctor has given such an auspicious hope of permanent improvement in mother's condition, the time seems very long in which I have received no news of its realization, and I wait for it eagerly, for I still remember how ill mother was when I said good-bye to her. It would be a great pleasure to me to have a few lines from mother's own hand once more, after such a long time. At any rate, I shall get more detailed news from Theodore next Wednesday, if I should not receive a letter before then. That I am living here very quietly until the Jägers return from Stargard, I have already written you. Such time as I have not been in Carlsburg, I pass all alone, and, according to rule, here, for I have nobody to run around with, really, and that is a good thing, for I feel more comfortable than I ever did, and can study without interruption, which I never should have done in Potsdam, on account of my friends and the service. At present I am chiefly busy with chemistry, at which I work several hours every day with a medical student who is getting ready for his examination. I have looked at some of the farms in the neighborhood, which, on an average, are in nearly perfect condition, but almost entirely devoted to agriculture; and at table in the public-house ("Deutsches Haus" hotel) one hears all the burly figures with red faces, thick hands, and enviable appetite, who come there daily to the number of six or eight, or more, speak of nothing but tillage and the grain trade. Although they all shout terribly and gesticulate violently, I rarely understand what they say, for Low-German is commonly spoken, and very rapidly, so that I only distinguish, now and then, something like "rape-seed," "oats," "peas,"



“planting-machines,” “threshing,” “Pomeranian last,”\* and “Berlin Schäpel.”† I listen to this with a very intelligent expression, think it over, and dream at night of threshed oats, manure, and stubble-rye. All the Eldena people are still out of town, the teachers as well as most of the scholars. The principal of the agricultural school, Schulz, is also manager of the rather important farm at that place; the latter is, however, stupidly enough, not connected with the school, so that, though the students are at liberty to observe what goes on if they please, it is not otherwise used for their instruction. The number of pupils—ninety odd—is too large to unite instruction with practice, according to the real design of the institution. A reliable opinion in this matter cannot be formed before the studies begin again, or I have, at least, spoken with the principal; but I hardly believe so far that I shall learn more in the lecture-rooms there than from good books. On the other hand, the principal also receives some pupils on the farm itself; this is admirably managed; Schulz has transformed a large part of the land which had a cold soil and was swampy into fields that now pass for the best in the neighborhood, so that he has taken in at the fall harvest the fifteenth and sixteenth crop of grain; the fresh clover stands up everywhere like a brush, and, though the barns are large, one sees four or five ricks as high as a house standing in the fields. Tile-kiln, distillery, and brewery are there, too—the two latter partly destroyed by fire this year, however, and so it is doubtful whether they will be in operation this winter. As Schulz’s pupil, one could certainly learn a great deal; the only question is whether he will receive me, and whether he will not

\* *Last*, a weight; about 4000 pounds.

† *Schäpel*, a measure; a quart.

charge a disproportionate tuition-fee. Moreover, Eldena is a good half-mile from here, and in winter the road will be bottomless. Since I must live in the town now on account of the military, I shall first see how I may contrive to hear one or two of the lecture-courses there that are the most useful for me at present. Besides, I shall try to make such progress as I may towards my goal here at the university and by study at home, and, if I can get leave of absence for a considerable time, on one of the neighboring farms. It is a real pity that I could not stay longer with mother, instead of spending these four weeks here; but they had made hell so hot for me in Potsdam, to hurry me off as soon as possible to the division; Captain Röder even thought I must march after them immediately, if no officer had remained behind to give different orders, so that I was afraid of having a bad reception here because I had not come sooner. Instead of that, I received, on inquiry, a very nice letter from Captain von Portatius, wherein he freely granted leave of absence until his return. To return to Berlin immediately was very expensive, and I prefer to go there at Christmas-time, if possible. You expressed a wish to see the rough draft of my answer to Lienchen's letter, but it is written too badly "every which way" for you to get a clear idea from it. I prefer, therefore, to give you a copy of the most essential parts of the rather long letter, which I beg you to share with Bernhard some time, for he has written me a letter similar to Lienchen's, and in answering him I have (to avoid writing the same thing three times) referred him to this copy of my letter. The self-same begins with a string of apologies, regrets, and expressions of gratitude which will not interest you so much, and I shall only repeat that which was particularly designed for the defence of my views:

. . . —that the necessity did not exist for me to become a country squire, is my opinion, too; but, on the other hand, you will not seriously assert, although I ascribe to you pronounced bureaucratic views, that the duties to his country which are incumbent upon every one exactly require of me that I shall become a government official. Rather, I believe, I satisfy these obligations completely if, in whatever calling I choose, I do all that can be expected of a patriotic citizen. I believed, then, that I could be quite independent in making such a choice of profession as, with my inclinations and connections, seemed to me most sensible. That from the first the nature of the occupation and of subordinate places in our national official life has not appealed to me; that I do not think it unqualified good fortune to be an office-holder or even minister; that it appears to me just as respectable and sometimes more useful to raise grain than to write administrative orders; that my ambition strives rather not to obey than to command: these are *facta* for which I can allege no reason beyond my personal taste, and yet so it is. Of all the considerations that might have moved me to combat this disinclination, the most worthy would have been the wish to work for the good of my fellow-citizens on a larger scale than is possible for a man in private life. Without regard to whether I am really noble-minded enough to employ my powers to promote the welfare of others rather than my own, my opinion is, even placing the least modest estimate upon my capabilities, that it would make no difference in the prosperity of Prussia's inhabitants whether I or another of the many excellent people who strive for this aim shall be connected with or preside over the government of a province. The individual office-holder among

us has but little independence in his activities, even in the highest place, and with the others it is practically limited to shoving ahead the administrative machinery in the path once prescribed. The Prussian office-holder is like an individual in an orchestra. Whether he plays first violin or triangle he must, without oversight or influence upon the whole, play off his fragment as it is assigned to him, whether he considers it good or bad. But I wish to make music such as I discern to be good, or none at all. In a country with a free constitution every one who consecrates himself to the public service can openly put his whole strength into the defence and execution of those regulations and systems of whose righteousness and utility he is convinced, and he has no need to recognize anything but these qualities as his guide in his actions, since he transfers to his public career the independence of his private life. There one can really enjoy the consciousness of having done what he could for the good of his country. Let him succeed or not, let his views prevail or not, the effort remains equally meritorious. But with us it is necessary for one to be a salaried and dependent officer in order to take part in public affairs; one must belong wholly to the official caste, share their views, whether right or wrong, and forego all individuality in thought and action. Abuses, real or apparent, connected with our chiefs, superiors, and even our colleagues, we must observe without daring to attack them openly, and even that which is subordinated to us is under the influence of tradition and inflexible rules rather than under that of the superior officer. Even in my short experience I have often seen how the costly time and labor of highly paid officials were brought to nothing in a fashion to convince one that business is invented to

give the office-holders at hand something to do, not that office-holders are appointed to transact necessary business; and my distinguished superiors fought against this and other absurdities with all energy, but without success; it is in the nature of our government. I have often heard high-placed officials in Aix-la-Chapelle and Potsdam say that this or that regulation is injurious, oppressive, unjust, and still they did not dare to make even a most respectful protest, but on the contrary saw themselves obliged to further them with all their strength, against their conviction. Whence, then, is satisfaction to be derived in the practice of one's calling—in the consciousness of originating useful measures, or even of merely doing one's duty to his country? But conflicts of that sort in the service would be rather frequent in my case, especially as my political faith is radically opposed to that of our government. How, then, can I reach the conviction that I am useful to my fellow-citizens, if I consider the system by which I help to govern much less advantageous than the opposite one, and in any case unjust? How shall I make answer to my own conscience for enlisting under the banner of an administration whose principles I think I must attack, as far as obedience to existing laws permits, as one of my chief duties to my country? You may think it ridiculous, gracious cousin, for me to assert that I have a political conviction and even a conscience; yet you must admit that I cannot share in that best reward of a public servant, the consciousness of having devoted his life to the welfare of his fellow-citizens rather than to his own, except under the assumption that I have a conscience. So you must really permit me (the better to realize the event of my entering the service from that genuinely worthy motive) to borrow a conscience, if you will not admit that I have

one of my own. Probably with few of the famous statesmen, especially in countries that have an absolute system of government, was love of country the motive that took them into the service; much more commonly ambition, the wish to command, to be admired and famous.

I must confess that I am not free from this passion, and many kinds of distinction—as that of a soldier in war, of a statesman under a free constitution, like Peel, O'Connell, Mirabeau, etc., of a participant in energetic political movements—would attract me as the flame draws the moth. On the other hand, I am less stimulated by the results to which I may attain on the wide beaten road, through examinations, connections, study of legal documents, antiquity, and favor of my superiors. Then, too, there are moments when I cannot think without painful regrets of all the gratifications for vanity that awaited me in the service: the satisfaction of seeing one's usefulness and superiority officially recognized through rapid promotion and other distinctions; the consciousness of being a man of importance and influence, before whom the less important bow; the self-complacent reflection that one is considered a capable and useful person, is noticed, talked about, and envied; all the real private glory which would finally irradiate me and my family, all that dazzles me when I have drunk a bottle of wine, and I need matter-of-fact and unbiassed reflection in order to say to myself that these are unsubstantial fancies of silly vanity, belonging in the same category with the pride of the dandy in his coat and of the banker in his money; that it is unwise and fruitless to seek happiness in the opinion of others, and that a sensible person should live unto himself and for what he recognizes as right and true, but not for the impression he makes on others and the talk that may be



current about him before or after his death. In short, I am not free from ambition, but consider it as bad a passion as any other and rather more foolish, because, if I surrender to it, it will demand the sacrifice of my entire strength and independence, without giving, even in case of the greatest success, permanent satisfaction and contentment.

Still oftener than from ambition our officials enter the service to obtain a respectable and secure livelihood, and because lack of capital prevents them from undertaking any other reputable business. In my situation, I give the preference to farming even in this respect. You make the very flattering representation, dear cousin, as does Bernhard, too, that I have talents which permit me to hope for exceptional success in the public service. If I should admit this, it would still seem to me to furnish no decisive reason for entering an official career: the same capacities promise good results in any other business as well, and perhaps the conduct of a large landed estate nowadays requires more intellect than to be privy-councillor. I believe especially that, in the case of a property so large, and, in general, situated as the Kniephof estate is, the full strength and industry of a clever man are required to get the yield from those farms which they are capable of —perhaps, even, to maintain it as it is, if the times should get still worse. Bernhard does not mean to give up the public service altogether, and he is better suited to it, I think, than I am. He is decidedly attached to the principles of our administration, takes pleasure in his official work, always is on excellent terms with his superiors, knows very well how to adapt himself to the relations which the service involves, and has a lively desire to be minister, or even president. But that he or I, or both of

us together, while away on the public service, could personally administer three large estates, incidentally and *par distance*, I hold to be impossible without great and dangerous injury to our possessions; for the management of an important estate, even when one lives on it, cannot be carried on efficiently even together with the affairs of the president of a provincial court, if these have conscientious attention. Further, even if Bernhard's presence sufficed for the management of our estates, I am convinced that, from a purely material standpoint, I can employ my activity more advantageously in agriculture than in the public service, aside from the fact that I consider the possession of a large fortune as a prerequisite to enjoyment of the public service, so that I may make my appearance in public, whatever the situation, with the *éclat* that I think becoming, and also may be in a position easily to surrender all advantages which my office affords as soon as my official duties conflict with my conviction or my taste. What would be the outlook, then, for me, in my utter poverty, who of old have a dangerous tendency to spend more than I get—a tendency that I now combat successfully in my solitude, while I can scarcely endure falling behind any one in any respect when I am in the company of my equals? If my career were the most successful I could expect, I should have an income on which I, with my requirements, could marry and set up a household in the city in my fortieth year, perhaps as president, or the like, when I shall be dried up with documentary dust, a hypochondriac, diseased in chest and abdomen from sitting, and need a wife as a nurse. For this moderate advantage, for the itch to have myself called *Herr Präsident*, for the consciousness that I am seldom worth as much to the country as I cost it, but that sometimes my influence is a



hinderance and an injury, while in general I fulfil what I indiscreetly assumed as a duty—for this I am finally resolved not to give up my convictions, my independence, my whole vital force and activity, so long as there are thousands, and among these many distinguished people, to whose taste those prizes are sufficiently precious to make them glad to fill the place which I leave empty. . . .

Here follow some apologies for the length of the letter and other things—a multitude of compliments, protestations, and hopes; and at the end a lot of good resolutions, uttered in the modest conviction that I shall always continue to be a very estimable member of human society. But all this is not found in my rough draft, which is very incomplete and confused, so that I have been able to reproduce much of it only approximately, or not at all, for my letter was at least twice as long as this. I especially miss one thing that I regret, on Bernhard's account particularly, a discursive argument against his proposition to be office-holder and agriculturist at the same time—when one would certainly neglect one thing in favor of the other, attaining nothing perfect in either, and in the end falling between two stools. Yet this letter is already too long, and you will certainly have trouble in studying it all through. When you go to Kniephof, please take it to Bernhard, or send it to him. And please write me soon whether it is your wish that I should go to Stettin or Kniephof when you are there, or whether you prefer to come to Carlsburg so that we may draw up the contract for the sale of Külz, since the election of Landrath may give us trouble, and then it would be important for us to have one vote more. When Bernhard once gets to be Landrath I shall make an effort to be chosen district deputy; then he can do the representing very comfortably if he likes.

When I came from Carlsburg I spent twenty-four hours in Putbus. An acquaintance of mine from the island \* took me there with him. I dined with the prince and learned from him much of interest about his embassy.† He asked whether you still carried on the potato distillery so zealously. He has founded a sugar factory, very pretty and complete, but it is not yet in operation. He invited me to inspect it, and was generally very nice. A very pretty Lady von Stockhausen, who comes from Hanover and now lives in Berlin, was taking the baths there, and I made her acquaintance on this occasion, as well as that of her fat, light-haired husband. On the return trip I suffered from sea-sickness, which did me a lot of good, by-the-way. I wish you the like—*i. e.*, without sea-sickness—and beg you to give my cordial salutations to mother, and soon to send me news of her condition. Your obedient son,

BISMARCK.

SCHÖNHAUSEN, *February 17, 1847.*

ONLY BELOVED JEANETTE FRIEDERICKE CHARLOTTE ELEONORE DOROTHEA,—Just by way of variety I am going to write you in the morning, and, sooth to say, on a gloomy, rainy morning. I will at least let the sun shine in me while I think only of you. It is half past eight, and here, sixteen feet away from the window, it is so dark that I can scarcely write. So then, you, Black Sun, must shine within me very bright if I am to succeed. How can black give light? Only in the form of polished ebony or lava. Smooth and hard as that you are not; therefore, my metaphor of the black sun is

\*Rügen.

† On the accession of Queen Victoria.

false. Are you not rather a dark, warm summer night, with fragrance of flowers and heat-lightning?—for I should hardly like to say a starry and moonlight night: that picture seems to me too monotonously placid. . . . I am interrupted.

I have been bargaining for horses the whole morning, and I behaved like the women at Siegmund's or Rogge's. After I had made the dealer lead before me about twenty in the maddest rain on smooth ice, I bought nothing, although they were all Danish horses. Speaking of horses, it occurs to me that you must ride, even if I must turn into a horse to carry you. Haven't you any physician there who will make the necessity plain to your father? Make a tool of him so that he shall say that you can't fail to go blind, or something of that kind, if you do not ride. Without lying he can say that it is necessary for your health. For the rest, your letter of the 12th gave me quite uncommon pleasure: in the first place, because I am not such a spoiled creature as you are, and scarcely dared to hope that I should have a reply so early as Sunday to my letter which you could not receive before Thursday evening, according to the postal arrangements there, although it reached Stolp Wednesday morning. My most cordial thanks for it; and persevere in this course. Further, I notice with especial satisfaction that your letter to me is in the years of increase. When I first saw it, it was one leaf in size; the next time it was two, and now it is three. Let it keep growing until it comes to me as big as a volume.

You are right, my heart; mistrust is the bitterest, most terrible torment. It is nothing else but doubt, the first seed of all evil, applied to the intercourse of men among themselves—the source of almost all bitterness and hos-

tility. Somewhere it is written: "He who does not love his neighbor whom he sees, how shall he love God whom he does not see?" I should like to say the same thing in reference to confidence instead of love. We have, even in the distrustful legal system, the adage, "*Quivis bonus habetur donec malus probetur*" (Let every one be accounted good until he is proved bad). So then, if you wish to be nothing but a hard-hearted judge to me, you should trust me until you have learned by experience that I deserve mistrust. But if you love me, you should forgive me seven times seventy times, even if I have actually sinned against you. Will you be able to do that? Four hundred and ninety times! I shall not require it so often as that, at least for gross offences. But even if you are actually inclined to mistrust, you need not, on my account, make superhuman efforts to control yourself in that respect; time will cure that, and if my past life fails to inspire you with trust in my constancy, nevertheless you will soon convince yourself that you can have no doubt at least as to my true-heartedness. Besides, your possible mistrust will always be harmless between us, because (I could explain the psychological reasons were I not hurried to catch the mail) your mistrust will not offend me in the least, and because I myself, who used to trust almost no one without the most convincing proofs, have an immovable and inexhaustible confidence in you. The thesis, "Truth is the very fire that eternally vivifies and sustains the germ of existence," is one of those misty, indefinite phrases as to which it is difficult for one to get a clear conception, and which often have injurious results when they are transferred from poetry to actuality—especially by women who as young girls have observed life almost exclusively through the spectacles of the poets (the life of the larger

world, I mean). But forgive me: the gray rain is having its effect upon me, so that I involuntarily fall into the fretful doctrinaire tone of an old uncle. I do not want to instruct you or improve you—remain as you are. What I say expresses only a sort of exercise of my thoughts.

Appearances indicate that we shall not continue to have snow and thermometer at 10° up to April 11, and presumably from Friday on, when you are snugly ensconced on the sofa in the evening, or at night are awakened by mamma, you may think how the torn little banner of your knight and servant flutters in the nocturnal storm and rain on the brink of the riotous floods, on a brown horse that, pricking up its ears and snorting, gives token of its terror at the thunderous noise of the conflict in which the gigantic fields of ice engage with one another when they have drawn apart in discord and their mighty ruins tower and split into pieces in the eddy. Have you never seen the ice-drive of a great river? It is one of Nature's most impressive spectacles.

From my last letter you will, moreover, have formed the opinion that the summons of the sovereign king for April will apparently raise up no new separating wall between us, whose downfall we should be obliged to await. Country and king doubtless lose through this circumstance one of the most distinguished representatives and a pillar of the throne in the Reichstag—but our love is the winner.

I am so much obliged to you for taking up with French a little; and the fact that you did this before I requested it is a new guarantee of our mutual understanding, if there were need of it.

If you are fond of sad poems—Lenau, etc.—at present, I do not see in that a reversal of your former cheerful mood, and still less a contradiction to your heart's healthful

impulses, but rather an advance in sensitiveness to poetry and an insight into it. Innocent songs of spring are the verses of childhood and twelve-year-old-hood, of larks and lambs. It is, I think, deeply inherent in human nature—I would say, in the unconscious recognition of suffering and woe on earth, and vague yet mighty longing for better and nobler conditions—that, among people who are not quite easy-going and superficial, the dwelling upon the fragmentariness, the nothingness, the pain, that rule our present life, awakens more response than does the touching upon those less-potent elements which produce in us temporarily the flowers of untroubled cheerfulness, quickly fading, whose only native soil is childhood. Every person cultivated in intelligence and heart is affected and moved by the various kinds of tragedy on the stage and in real life in a fashion to which the idyllic and comic, in their most perfect form, can never attain. To be exalted to the level of cheerfulness (in the higher sense) and contentment, gives the conception of majesty, of the divine, which the human being can only in exceptional, favored moments and aspects feebly reflect. The thing that in an earthly sense is impressive and affecting, that can ordinarily be represented by human means, is always related to the fallen angel, who is beautiful, but without peace; great in his plans and endeavors, but without success; proud and sad. Such things as there are, outside of the province of religion, to stir our emotions, cannot, therefore, be cheerful and happy, but only serve us as a constant finger-post, showing where we may find peace. If your mind has grown more receptive for the poetry of autumn, of frost on a night in May, and all human experiences of this class, then that fact proves that you are no longer a twelve-year-old. The storm that rages in



the tops of the old trees, bending and breaking them, passes over the heads of children, children in body and mind, as it does over the little trees in the forest; on becoming larger they grow up into the layer of storms, and their roots must become stronger if they are not to fall. Our little Annchen seems to be growing also. When trees are injured in a storm, resin trickles from the wounds like alleviating tears, and heals them; but if they seek not protection against lacerations of that kind in their own resistant power, but repeatedly draw upon the medicament of the resinous tears (what an accidental play on the word!\*) they exhaust the source and wither.

“Words, words, words,” you will say.

How deeply I feel with you your mother’s illness! It makes me uneasy—perhaps without reason, as I do not yet know what her disease is; but do write me more explicitly about it. What you write about Mathäi is not, I fancy, to be taken in connection with the Versin cousin? I shudder at the thought: to marry a piano-forte, with a little monkey as a manikin on top of it! “Did I find the pastor’s wife disagreeable?” From what you say it seems so, almost. In no event, however, was it a feeling of deep-seated aversion, for I don’t remember her, either for good or evil: I have not the slightest idea what she looks like. If you wish, I shall make her acquaintance once more, nibbling at the hook of her amiability to see whether I shall be caught.

Among the women correspondents who spoil you, you refer to a “Pauline.” Who the devil is Pauline? Another cousin I do not know? *Apropos* of the devil, I can’t find any place in the Bible where it is forbidden to take the

\* The word is the compound “Harz-thränen,” resin-drops or heart-tears.



name of the devil in vain. If you know one, tell me of it.

My brother-in-law was obliged to return in haste because my sister expects her *accouchement* in a few days. Moritz has not yet answered me; and as he has the habit of being very prompt with his replies—to letters like my last, especially—I infer from this that he is in the humor of affliction which can still find no echo to the tone of my letter. If I could do or say anything whatever for his consolation! The only thing is the companionship of sympathetic people: how bright he was in Reinfeld! I must divert him for a day or two when I go to see you again, even though you may scold; it is necessary. I mean to write him again this evening, if possible.

I am really at war with myself as to whether or not, assuming that the danger from ice and water has passed by the 3d of March, I shall postpone the sessions which I have after that and employ the time up to the 20th in going to see you, my heart. On the 20th I must, *infailliblement*, be here. It is not certain, and yet it is likely, that I shall not be held by my official duties on the 4th; and what, then, you will ask, does prevent me? What interferes with this plan is a thing usually strange to me—avarice, the root of all evil. This winter I have bothered myself somewhat more than usual about the care of the poor in this neighborhood, and have found misery that could not be worse, if not in my villages, at least in the neighboring town of Jerichow. When I think how one dollar helps along such a hunger-stricken family for weeks, it seems to me almost like a theft from the poor who are hungry and cold if I spend thirty dollars to make the journey. I could, indeed, give that amount and still take the trip, but that does not change matters; twice or ten times that

sum would relieve only a part of the suffering. Tell me, does this scruple hurt you—that my haste to see you does not prevent me from balking at mere contemptible money? I have, as I said, not yet reached a decision in this matter; nor do I yet know whether it will be possible for me to travel soon after the 3d; it depends on the weather. After the 20th I think I shall unquestionably be able to travel, and the latest date on which I shall set out is, as I look at it, the 21st—that is, in about four weeks. Shall I come sooner if my duties will permit? Command, and I obey! I shall then quiet myself like a sophist with the reflection that it is no extravagance which I indulge in for my pleasure, but a duty that I fulfil to my *fiancée*. That both come to the same thing is not my fault, and the poor shall still, in any case, have as much as the journey costs. This is a very ticklish question, how far I can hold myself justified in using for my pleasure the means that God has intrusted to my management, while there are people who are sick from want and cold in my immediate neighborhood, whose beds and clothing are pawned, so that they cannot go out to work. “Sell what thou hast, give to the poor, and follow Me!” But how far can or should that lead us? Of the poor there are more than all the treasures of the king can feed. *Nous verrons* how it will turn out.

Titan is not here, as I have learned with regret; Malvine must have taken him away with her, for he was here. I must think how I can get him, for I positively must have him. And I “am to wear a velvet coat,” *angela mia*! Often have I heard that knights wore the colors of their mistresses; but that the latter went so far as to prescribe the material of the garments—of that I have never read a word in the romances. Does this little tailor’s whim fail

to impress you, or must I appear before you next time in Manchester goods? It would be obligatory, in the latter event, to strike up a correspondence with Jourez betimes, for I do not know whether he will be disposed offhand to allow one of his customers to walk in the street in such garb. . . .

I have written this letter in most fragmentary fashion, from beginning to end of the day, subject to continuous interruptions and unrelated transactions; and when I read it over now it strikes me as being insipid as a commissioner of justice.\* Bellin has just left me, and at last it is still: I hear nothing but the ticking of the clock and Odin licking his paws.

It is odd that as I write this I hear sounds as though of scribbling and turning over the leaves of books in the bed-chamber, whose door stands wide open. It is but half-past ten: not yet the hour when ghosts do walk. Don't let your mother hear that.

My Jeanette, my Jeanneton, fare very well, hold dear and trust your dutiful

B.

SCHÖNHAUSEN, *February 21, '47.*

JOHANNA, MY OR OUR BETTER HALF!—I received your letter of the 18th to-day, and first I express my deep-felt thanks for the cordial love in it that touches me. Love knows no thanks and expects none, some one says. Thanks is a cold word. Never mind, I feel gratitude towards you, and yet love you. This afternoon I received your letter, and could not immediately sit down to reply to you, because I had to comply with a tiresome in-

\* *I.e.*, as "Shallow, a country justice."

vation, and had postponed my departure until five in order to get the mail first. I have just come back, cold, wet, and irritated by the stupid people, but I must still write a few lines to-day.

I answer your letter point by point. To be dike-captain is certainly very unfortunate this year, when one has a *fiancée* seventy miles away. Since last Sunday we have had thawing weather, and for several days we have expected the river to break up, but it is quiet yet. A few hours ago I received a message by courier saying that the ice at Dresden and in Bohemia has been moving for two days—a dangerous thing, when it breaks up above earlier than here, which may cause us much trouble. To-morrow, or Tuesday at latest, the ice-drive must extend to this point. A fortnight is the shortest period in which the performance can be finished; sometimes it lasts six, usually three to four weeks. My sentimental tirades in relation to poor people and expenses of the journey will apparently remain empty phrases, and my virtue will not be put to the test, since the service will probably not leave me free much before the middle of March, without regard to possible postponements. At any rate, I will endeavor to have the meeting of the equestrian order, which was set for the 20th, held before that time.

Tell me, my angel—you write so earnestly about postage-scruples—am I or are you the Pomeranian who does not understand a joke? Do you really believe it concerns me how much postage a letter costs?—that I should write one less if it were ten times as much? This idea makes me uncommonly merry, if you meant it seriously, as by the tone I almost believe you did; and if I could draw caricatures I would depict my profile on the margin more sarcastic-sardonic-ironic-satiric than you have ever seen it.

You remember, perhaps, that in Zimmerhausen I wondered at your courage in accepting me, a half-stranger, in the character I still sustain; but that you know me so little that you regard me, a born spendthrift, as avaricious, shows that you have surrendered yourself in blind trust, in trust that can alone be inspired by a love for which I kiss your hands and feet. How little you know the world, my heart!

Why do you so lament your last letter? I found nothing in it that was not dear to me, or could have been dearer. And, were it otherwise, where should you in future find a breast on which to disburden your own of that which oppresses it, if not with me? Who is more bound and entitled to share suffering and anxiety with you, bear your sicknesses, your faults, than I who have obeyed my impulse to do this, voluntarily, without being compelled to it by the obligation of relationship or other duty? You had a woman friend with whom you could take refuge at all times, by whom you were never repulsed. Do you miss her in this way in an exigency? My dear, dear Johanna, must I tell you once more that I love you; *sans phrase*, that we ought to share with each other joy and suffering—I your suffering and you mine; that we are not united for the sake of showing and sharing with each other only that which gives pleasure; but that you may pour out your heart at all times to me and I to you, whatever it may contain; that I must and will bear your sorrows, your thoughts, your naughtinesses, if you have any, and love you as you are—not as you ought to be or might be? Make me serviceable, use me for what purpose you will, ill-treat me without and within, if you have the wish to do so. I am there for that purpose, at your disposal; but never be embarrassed in any

way with me. Trust me unreservedly, in the conviction that I accept everything that comes from you with profound love, whether it be glad or patient. Do not keep your gloomy thoughts for yourself while you look on me with cheerful brow and merry eyes, but share with me in word and look what you have in your heart, whether it be blessing or sorrow. Never be faint-hearted with me, and if anything in yourself appears to you indiscreet, sinful, depressing, reflect that everything of that kind is present in me a thousand times more, and that I am saturated with it far too thoroughly and deeply to look on such things with contempt when seen in others, or to become aware of them in you otherwise than with love, even if not always with patience. Look upon us as mutual father-confessors; as more than that, since we, according to the Scripture, are to be "one flesh."

The 22d, morning.

I have just been abruptly torn from sweetest dreams to be told that the ice is beginning to move—in itself a very favorable bit of news. The water is rising an inch every hour, and will probably continue at that rate and somewhat slower, if no ice-pack ensues, until it stands ten or twelve feet higher than at present. How long it will then remain at such a height—on that it depends when I shall see you. For I must see you at last as soon as the Elbe allows me to go, in spite of the Diet of the Circle and everything: otherwise your image will grow fainter and fainter until it will be invisible. For the meeting of the equestrian order, however, I must be here. I can only write a few lines while the horses are saddled, and that makes me heartily sorry, since I was so full of instruction last evening that to-day I should have liked



to give you a good stroking until you purred comfortably; but who knows when I can write again in the next few days? And so I will not keep this letter, though it is short. Do not take pains to become a stiff, smooth hedge from the outset: it can be strong and green only on condition that it grows up unrestrained and is trimmed down to the quick by the gardener—and that I shall certainly not prevail on my heart to do. Rather have the free growth of the wild rose: the hateful moss and the too-sharp thorns we shall both endeavor to remove without pain, or at least carefully. Farewell; the cakes of ice are playing the “Pappenheim March” as a summons to me, and the chorus of mounted peasants is singing “Lively, Comrades!” Why do the ice blocks not really do it? How beautiful that would be, and how poetical! It is to me like a breath of fresh life that this tiresome waiting is past, and the affair begins to move. To-night “I stand in the dark midnight,” and you “To the Lord devoutly pray for your dearest far away.” *Je t’embrasse*. Your vassal.

B.

SCHÖNHAUSEN, *February 23, '47*.

MY ANGEL!—I shall not send this letter on its way to-morrow, it's true, but I do want to make use of the few unoccupied minutes left to me to satisfy the need I am conscious of every hour, to communicate with you, and forthwith to compose a “Sunday letter” to you once more. To-day I have been “on the move” all day long. “The Moorish king rode up and down,” unfortunately not “through Granada's royal town,” but between Havelberg and Jerichow, on foot, in a carriage, and on horseback, and got mighty cold doing so—because, after the warm



weather of the last few days, I had not made the slightest preparation to encounter five degrees below freezing, with a cutting north wind, and was too much in haste or too lazy to mount the stairs again when I noticed the fresh air. During the night it had been quite endurable and superb moonlight. A beautiful spectacle it was, too, when the great fields of ice first set themselves massively in motion, with explosions like cannon-shots, shattering themselves against one another; they rear, shoving over and under each other; they pile up house-high, and sometimes build dams obliquely across the Elbe, in front of which the pent stream rises until it breaks through them with rage. Now are they all broken to pieces in the battle—the giants—and the water very thickly covered with ice-cakes, the largest of which measure several square rods, which it bears out to the free sea like shattered chains, with grumbling, clashing noises. This will go on so for about three days more, until the ice that comes from Bohemia, which passed the bridge at Dresden several days ago, has gone by. (The danger is that the ice-cakes by jamming together may make a dam, and the stream rise in front of this—often ten to fifteen feet in a few hours.) Then comes the freshet from the mountains which floods the bed of the Elbe, often a mile in width, and is dangerous in itself, owing to its volume. How long that is to last we cannot tell beforehand. The prevailing cold weather, combined with the contrary sea wind, will certainly retard it. It may easily last so long that it will not be worth while to go to Reinfeld before the 20th. If only eight days should be left me, would you have me undertake it, nevertheless?—or will you wait to have me without interruption after the 20th, or perhaps 18th? It is true that *fiancé* and dike-captain are almost incompatible; but were I

not the latter, I have not the slightest idea who would be. The revenues of the office are small, and the duties sometimes laborious; the gentlemen of the neighborhood, however, are deeply concerned, and yet without public spirit. And even if one should be discovered who would undertake it for the sake of the title, which is, strange to say, much desired in these parts, yet there is no one here (may God forgive me the offence) who would not be either unfit for the business or faint-hearted. A fine opinion, you will think, I have of myself, that I only am none of this; but I assert with all of my native modesty that I have all these faults in less degree than the others in this part of the country—which is, in fact, not saying much.

I have not yet been able to write to Moritz, and yet I must send something to which he can reply, inasmuch as my former letter has not as yet brought a sign of life. Or have you crowded me out of his heart, and do you fill it alone? The little pale-faced child is not in danger, I hope. That is a possibility in view of which I am terrified whenever I think of it—that as a crowning misfortune of our most afflicted friend, this thread of connection with Marie might be severed. But she will soon be a year and a half old, you know; she has passed the most dangerous period for children. Will you mope and talk of warm hands and cold love if I pay a visit to Moritz on my next journey, instead of flying to Reinfeld without a pause as is required of a loving youth?

That you are getting pale, my heart, distresses me. Do you feel well otherwise, physically, and of good courage? Give me a bulletin of your condition, your appetite, your sleep. I am surprised also that Hedwig Dewitz has written to you—such a heterogeneous nature, that can have so little in common with you. She was educated with my

sister for several years in Kniephof, although she was four or five years the elder of the two. Either she loves you—which I should find quite easy to explain—or has other prosaic intentions. I fancy that she, as is quite natural, does not feel at home in her father's house; she has, therefore, always made her home with others for long periods and with satisfaction.

In your letter which lies before me I come upon "self-control" again. That is a fine acquisition for one who may profit by it, but surely to be distinguished from compulsion. It is praiseworthy and amiable to wean one's self from tasteless or provoking outbursts of feeling, or to give to them a more ingratiating form; but I call it self-constraint—which makes one sick at heart—when one stifles his own feelings in himself. In social intercourse one may practise it, but not we two between ourselves. If there be tares in the field of our heart, we will mutually exert ourselves so to dispose of them that their seed cannot spring up; but if it does, we will openly pull it up, but not cover it artificially with straw and hide it—that harms the wheat and does not injure the tares. Your thought was, I take it, to pull them up unaided, without pain to me by the sight of them; but let us be in this also one heart and one flesh, even if your little thistles sometimes prick my fingers. Do not turn your back on them nor conceal them from me. You will not always take pleasure in my big thorns, either—so big that I cannot hide them; and we must pull at them both together, even though our hands bleed. Moreover, thorns sometimes bear very lovely flowers, and if yours bear roses we may perhaps let them alone sometimes. "The best is foe to the good"—in general, a very true saying; so do not have too many misgivings about all your tares, which I have not yet

discovered, and leave at least a sample of them for me. With this exhortation, so full of unction, I will go to sleep, although it has just struck ten, for last night there was little of it; the unaccustomed physical exercise has used me up a bit, and to-morrow I am to be in the saddle again before daylight. Very, very tired am I, like a child.

The 24th, morning.

Strange to say, the water has not risen in the least overnight; an ice jam and pack must therefore have occurred above, so that it can't get down. I am rather angry that I have no news about it, and will appease myself by turning my thoughts to you, *angela*. It is quite cold and windy again, especially for riding. Every two miles, all along the Elbe, picket guards of four riders are posted, so that I may find messengers at my disposal everywhere, and news and orders may be forwarded as rapidly as possible, and yet since midnight the reports from upstream are lacking—it is an incredible lack of discipline, but in a few hours I shall know the cause of it, *et j'y mettrai bon ordre*.

You poor heart, I am wearying you with the flood business, and you surely want to read of quite other things. So I will tell you also that Senfft\* writes to me, "A clever, good, and devout girl has become yours, and that is a great deal." There you see how people of insight think of you. What does he find "a great deal" of in that? That a girl is clever, good, and devout, or that one of this kind has become mine? A verse, which I regard as eminently mendacious, has lodged somewhere in my memory: "Out of guile, cunning, deceit, and conceit, Nature wove

\* Von Senfft-Pilsach, later first President of Pomerania.

with soft gossamer threads a fickle thing; it is called—girl.” Johanna, is there really a bit of truth in it, and can any one who knows the world, as Senfft does, entertain such views of the show-piece of creation? No; he finds it “a great deal” that happiness so unmerited has been accorded to a scamp like myself, and he is right. Though you should now modestly protest against this explanation, yet the moment will come when you will accept it. Half in jest, half in earnest, I believe that; however, it will pass by—that moment. But I still retain the conviction that the fact is as S. says.

Just now a sick old woman came from the village to beg, and I repulsed her harshly because her only daughter broke into a house and stole one hundred Reichsthaler, and is in jail, although she denies it with equal stupidity and boldness, and I believe her mother knew of it. I suppose that was very merciless on my part. “Judge not, that ye be not judged.” But one is so often deceived by mendicity, and so many are in need who do not deserve to be. But I will inquire more closely into their circumstances, and not meddle in God’s retributive office.

Evening.

To-day was my deceased mother’s birthday. How clearly it rises before me—when my parents lived in Berlin on the Opernplatz next to the Catholic church, and when I used to be brought from the boarding-school by the game-keeper in the morning, and found my mother’s room decorated with lily-of-the-valley, of which she was particularly fond, and with gifts of garments, books, and interesting trinkets; then a big dinner, with many young officers, who are now old majors, and carousing, old, decorated gentlemen, who, ere now, have been devoured by worms.

And when I had been sent away from the table, as though my hunger had been appeased, the chambermaid took me in hand, to ruin my stomach utterly with purloined caviar, kisses, etc. What a lot all these domestics did steal. My mother was a beautiful woman who loved display, with a clear and lively intelligence, but little of that winning warmth of manner which the Berliner calls "Gemüth." She wished me to learn much and to come to much, and it often seemed to me that she was hard, cold towards me. What a mother is worth to her child one learns only when it is too late—when she is dead. The most mediocre maternal love, with all the dilution of maternal selfishness, is a very giant compared with any childish affection. My father I really loved, and when I was not with him I formed resolutions that had little endurance; for how often have I rewarded his truly unmeasured, disinterested, kindly tenderness for me with coldness and apathy. And yet I cannot withdraw the assertion that I was fond of him at the bottom of my heart. I never spoke with my father about matters of faith. His belief was not quite that of Christianity: he relied so upon God's love and mercy that everything else than this reliance seemed to him superfluous. About my mother's religion I only remember that she read much in the *Hours of Devotion*, and that she was often terrified and angry at my pantheistic tendency and utter disbelief in the Bible and Christianity. She did not go to church and was much attached to Swedenborg, the prophetess of Prevorst, and the theories of Mesmer, Schubert, Justinus Kerner—an enthusiasm that stood in strange contradiction to her otherwise cold, intellectual clearness. So far as I know, her belief also was not Christian, as we understand the word. Do you know what a prince of



Friesland said at his baptism? He asked the priest whether his heathen ancestors had been damned for their unbelief. Upon an affirmative reply he refused to let himself be baptized, for, where his father was, he wished also to be. I mention that only as a fact, without applying it to myself. Many comfortless thoughts, I will not say doubts, connect themselves with it. Two shall be grinding at one mill; the one shall be taken and the other rejected. If God will have it so, there is no grumbling, but— Well, as to the “but” orally when we have opportunity.

I, too, am already beginning to be spoiled with letters. I half thought the mail would bring me one from you to-day, but sought in vain for one that began with “Right Honorable.” Irritating business letters, unexpectedly pressing demands for money going back to my father’s day, and one from Moritz, which shows great depression, however much he tries to pick himself up—the poor young fellow. The letter makes an impression on me as though written by a person who is tired to death, who tries by force to keep awake, and nods off between the confused sentences. It is a dangerous thing to love as he did, and yet it is a beautiful thing, so long as the hope of reunion is not abandoned. But he who should love in this fashion, and either not believe at all in continued life or resurrection, or believe in the damnation of the other part? “Without thee, where would be my heaven?” That sounds almost sacrilegious. But were it not the highest degree of love, consciously to sacrifice one’s own salvation to her he loves? Can you imagine the case that some one’s soul would be saved by another’s voluntary perdition? The possibility is conceivable. Should I, in that case, consent to the loss of yours in order to save my own? All nonsense. Moritz is full of gratitude for our reciprocal



friendship. The latter we will maintain for him; the former we will strive to deserve. About the conception of conjugal happiness he is moved by one of my expressions to dispense a priestly admonition which goes wide of the mark, because he attaches too narrow and trivial a sense to my words about "being happy" and "conferring happiness," and seems to think I mean by them nothing more than freedom from domestic vexation and that sort of petty household woes. He directs my attention to guidance from above; but that goes without saying when I speak of "being happy." He begs earnestly for a visit from me, and he shall have it. . . .

*Apropos* of Stolp: It was strange that the hussars in Schlawe declared themselves all the more surprised by our engagement because it passed for certain there that I was engaged to a Countess Schulenburg. For a long time Caroline wanted to make such a match as that, and impressed it upon me daily last autumn in Ünglingen, while I was forging entirely different plans. How come Caroline and the hussars to agree?

On my window-sill, among all sorts of crocuses and hyacinths, stand two camellias which always inspire me with strange thoughts. One of them, slender and pretty, with its ornamental crown and soft, pale, very pale, pink blossoms, but little foliage and only two buds, transports me to Reddetin, holds itself rather stiffly and lisps English. The other strikes the eye with far less beauty, and its stalk betrays in its gnarled twisting lack of care in pruning. From the midst of the foliage looks out a dead branch, but the crown is rich in leaves and the leaves greener than its neighbor's: it promises a rich bloom in its eight buds, and its color is deep dark red and white in irregular, gay variegation. Do you take the

comparison amiss? It is a lame comparison, moreover, for I do not love camellias, because they are without odor, and you I love precisely for the fragrance of your spirit's bloom, which is white, dark red, and black.

I really am capable of a passion for flowers, but those without perfume which are the pride of most gardeners—dahlias, peonies, tulips, camellias—have been indifferent to me since I was a child. With regard to people, I have again and again been obliged to disabuse my mind of the naturally implanted error, which from external beauty unconsciously infers an interior to correspond. I never have found such an agreement: the nearest approach to it is in Caroline, but her beauty is very far from regularity, and on the other hand her worldly-wise and world-loving sense lacks precisely that *je ne sais quoi*, that fragrant breath from the unfathomed inmost depths of the spirit, which is neither poetry nor love nor religion, but which reinforces and elevates all three, and, where its influence is felt, makes one more receptive to them. Its caricature I call sentimentality; the genuine thing I feel when I am with you. But I know no word for it just now.

Perhaps I shall write a few lines more in the morning, or maybe I shall only have time to seal this up. The water does not seem to be dangerous on this occasion, but if we do not have warmer weather with rain, it will unfortunately be slow in running off. Most cordial remembrances to your dear parents, to whom I should also write, and to whom I beg that you will communicate any part of my letters that you think suitable. Farewell.

Your

BISMARCK.

The 25th.

At last the Elbe has risen two feet overnight. If she is going to be so tiresomely gentle-spirited every year as this year till now, then I should resign the command of her floods. I'd rather walk than ride lazy horses. It is now, at 7 A.M., four degrees below freezing, but feels warmer to me. The snow has been falling lightly, and, without the slightest breeze stirring, perpendicularly, for an hour; mist lies over the country; and, as here the ticking of the big clock, so there is no sound outside but the light clink of the gliding ice on the river and the monotonous cry of the wild geese, which tell me the welcome news that the melting weather will last. Even the people are quiet on the dike to-day, and let themselves be snowed on like posts, and all look sleepy—for which I can hardly blame them, as they had the worst night-watch, from twelve to six. Four times in twenty-four hours they are relieved, but I never.

I enclose a sample of the camellias for you, but the dark red will fade if Herr Böge, or whatever the name of the Zuckers postmaster was, keeps it three days again. I wonder whether they read my letters there. I always get yours according to schedule the second day. At the little stations in Pomerania there are people enough who are curious and have nothing to do. Where the Dresden railway crosses the Elbe at Riesa, breaks in the dike have occurred. I do not understand why more water does not come here. May God guard you, Jeanne the black, and bring us soon together. *Je m'impatiente.*

25th, Evening.

DEAREST,—I cannot write to your mother without sending you a few lines of thanks for your sausage-perfumed



PRINCESS BISMARCK



letter, and bringing to light a genuine bit of childishness. You wouldn't believe how superstitious I am, but just when I had come in, and, according to directions in your mother's letter, opened the package of sausages and broken the seal of your letter, the large clock suddenly, and quite without occasion, stopped still at three minutes before six. It is an old English hall-clock that my grandfather had from his youth up, that for seventy years has been standing on the same spot, had never been out of order, and also never had run down. I jogged it and it went again. Write me immediately that you are well and in good spirits. Your mother also complains that you are getting pale and thin. All that makes me so anxious, childish as I am. A little while ago I had a distressing experience. A respectable official whom I had a mind to scold because he had not been at his post, replied simply, "My only son has just died." It made me so sad. I will come as soon as the flood is over, in spite of all the district meetings. Only write me that you are well.

I did not assume that you were distrustful in spite of your letter at that time; else I should perhaps not have sent you the English verses. I only wanted to warn you against it, and should not have done that if you had not prompted it—that is, the warning. My trust in you is so immovable: why should I not take for granted a similar confidence on your part? You must really take my letters less seriously than you seem to do: the written word has such a solemn and indestructible look, and there is need of an inflection of the voice to explain it; but, my heart, I write to you—chatting as if we were sitting together—many a word for which I do not wish to be held responsible, as though it were spoken in confiden-

tial, easy-going talk and were blown away by the wind. I am beginning to be afraid that my last letters, which are still on the way, will make on you a more serious impression than they ought, for they were, I fancy, quite astonishingly over-wise. I would so much rather say all that to you while I hold you in my arms and look into your eyes: then I could be sure not to give you pain, my heart, and could immediately see it in your features if I had been unskilful—like the bear who smashes the fly on his master's forehead with a stone. When you read the English poems, my angel, keep in mind that I did not make them, but Byron. Had I been the poet and told the truth in them, the contents would certainly have been love once for all.

Do write me immediately how you are getting on in health. I had such a hateful dream. Moritz had said to you that it was all up with us, we were lost together because my faith was not correct and firm, and you shoved me into the rolling sea from the plank which I had seized in the shipwreck, for fear it would not support us both, and you turned from me, and I was once more as of old, only poorer by loss of a hope and of a friend. When I awoke, I smiled with the accepted lover's complacency: "The English call that a nightmare, the Germans call it an Alp." You must have received a letter this evening, a fragmentary one, perhaps just as the old clock of fate stopped. I am so nervously excited to-day; I will take another ride to quiet myself, and look after the guards. Do take care of your eyes, my dear one. *Soyez Jeanne la sage*. How nice of your mother to write me. Forgive this too-hurried scrawl. My musical huntsman is playing on the flute down-stairs a very soothing tune, "Thine is my heart"—and it shall always be, you angel. B.



It is seven degrees below freezing again, and clear starlight: the water is kept back by it uncommonly. But were it otherwise the danger would be very great this year. At last the Elbe rose to-day three feet, and fills all its bed like a lake. If rains and high winds come while the water is up, there may be distress yet. So long as the Elbe does not take to its old bed—*i. e.*, from a lake become a river—I cannot get away under the regulations, as I unfortunately have no substitute. Let us be patient during this time, and take comfort in view of other betrothed couples severed for years. Bellin received the letters with deep emotion, and showed them to me with pride.

*Reading this letter at daylight, I had a great mind to burn it, and should have done so if I had had the time for writing another one. It's all humbug; but, the ink being spent, you must take your chance. Read it, tear it, and never mind.\**

SCHÖNHAUSEN, *February 28, 1847.*

BELOVEDST,—With but a few lines can I thank you for your letter of Friday, as I must still let streams of official ink (which is much more gray than other sorts) flow through my pen this evening; but to-morrow must start early, and not return to the house all day.

In reply to your letter of last Sunday—as yet the longest, and, therefore, most valued—I would tell you how deeply I was touched by the sympathy you have bestowed upon my past life: I took the occasion to pity myself once more quite unfeignedly that life and people have so played with me. I was actually quite aged already in my twenty-third

\*Paragraph in italics was written in English.

year—at any rate, far and away more *blasé* than at present; and I regarded myself as quite unhappy, found the world and life in it stale and unprofitable, more so than I was willing to hint to my cousin or my father. I have perhaps grown more capricious, too, like my handwriting—you are right in that: one usually grows more so with years; still, with women it becomes easier for me to control this fault, and it will hardly be your lot to yield against your inclination. But how is it going to be with me? I am really curious to know whether you will yet get me into a black velvet covering or not. In March, at any rate, you cannot accomplish that without danger to my health—it is only a summer costume.

The Elbe begins to fall again, but is still eight to ten feet higher than the surrounding country, and this incalculable mass of water is held together and prevented from inundating the country only by narrow dikes, just wide enough for a wagon to be driven on them. If God did not send the freezing weather to enchain the confluent from time to time, we should be exposed to very dangerous conditions. Meanwhile the larger part of the water has now passed down-stream, I hope, or is passing, and that which the cold held back will soon follow, for the weather has been mild since early this morning. Moreover, it has been superbly calm as yet, so that the dikes have not suffered from the waves. This peaceable solution of the matter is, however, a tiresome one also, for it results in a much longer duration of the freshet. If this quiet weather lasts, I think that all anxiety will have passed in eight to twelve days; but if rain and storm come on, it may have finished two or three days sooner, though with risk, for there is still so much snow in the mountains that if it melts suddenly the water will rise above our heads. Be-

fore the 10th, therefore, the flood will not set me free—perhaps later. Then I have a few sessions with litigious peasant communities, which I could indeed arrange after the 20th; and yet they must come off, sooner or later. But even if I do postpone them, the question still remains whether, after deducting twice forty-eight hours for the journey there and back, I have time enough left over to go to you. *Nous verrons*: the result will show.

I saw my good mare Miss Breeze depart to-day with some sadness. She fell on the dike several times with me, for no good reason—a sign that she had outlived her usefulness as a riding horse, at least for me. She has carried me over many a piece of land and many a ditch; in reward for which she shall find repose in the care of my friend, Ulrich Dewitz, a great horse-breeder, and devote herself till her death to the delights of maternity. I take the liberty of introducing to you and commending, as her successor here, and your future acquaintance, a six-year-old youth, Mr. Mousquetaire, son of Demetrius and Red-rover-mare, who is said to find no obstacle on the land too high or too broad, and who in the last stag-hunt in Ivenack never for a second lost sight of the leader of the pack.

You care for nobody? But that is not a bit true, my heart, and the inference is also untrue, and, moreover, both of them will never be true, however romantic it seems to you; it is so tiresome that, in the long run, nobody can endure it, even with Christianity's consolation—for I believe it is in direct contradiction therewith, and the latter is eclipsed where that utterance can be true. That is another issue of the contest between faith and works. Faith that allows the believer to segregate himself from his brothers on this earth, so that he contents himself

with a putative isolated relation to the Lord alone, in mere contemplation, is a dead faith, that I characterized, if I am not mistaken, in an earlier letter as quietism (from *quies*, rest)—an erroneous way, in my opinion, into which pietism easily and often leads, especially with women. By this I mean with the isolation—surely not the spiritual arrogance that esteems itself holier than others—but, I might say, the quiet waiting for the Lord's day, in faith and hope, but without what seems to me true love. Where that is, there the need exists, I believe, to unite one's self in friendship or through other ties more closely to some visible being than through the bonds of the universal Christian love. Jesus himself had a disciple whom he "loved," that is, loved more deeply and differently from what the saying means, "Love one another"—for I am sure you do not want to exclude this last command with your "caring for nobody." But you should do more: you should have souls that come nearer to you than others, even though you should some time live without me—which, despite your sad premonitions about our never seeing each other again, is not likely to happen so soon. Nevertheless, *fatta sia la tua volontà*, and should it so happen, then think of this, my heart. I contend on principle against every gloomy view of the future, though I do not always master them; I make an effort to hope for the best in all circumstances, always, of course, with the foregoing Italian words of the Lord's Prayer as fundamental thoughts. Suffering, when it comes, makes itself felt soon enough—I do not wish to anticipate it through fear.

You ask me whether a locked-up heart is a very bad thing. I cannot say yes, unconditionally, but I am very much of your opinion that one should not wear it on the

sleeve before everybody, but lay it open only to the eyes of intimate friends.

The dividing-line between reticence and deceit, or even untruthfulness, it is not always easy to draw, and every one must act for himself as he can answer for it. In ordinary intercourse politeness imposes dissimulations enough, and a certain degree of perfection in these seems to me very desirable. Towards those who are greatly troubled and anxious when we are sick our love leads us to employ such dissimulations, to spare them pain; still oftener a lack of confidence is the occasion in cases where this is regarded very unfavorably, particularly towards parents. Nearly every mother sheds secret tears during the period when she must perceive that her children gradually—perhaps against their wish, and while struggling for the contrary—are estranged from her heart, and become colder and more reserved even towards her who formerly directed or knew every emotion of the childish spirit—a sort of fall of man repeated in every child, in that it comes to feel that it must cover its faults before its mother, and veils itself.

Would you really like to kill yourself with weeping, my angel? You should at least not let your parents hear that; but tell me why. (I am an Altmarker, who wants to know reasons; from the time I was two years old until I was seven, I was brought up in Pomerania—hence I sometimes can't understand a joke.) Why do you wish to cry? Because you have been thoughtless enough to promise yourself in marriage? Because your parents and the other people love you so? Because spring is coming, and we shall soon see each other again? The thing you lack is misfortune, my angel; or, because the Lord does not send it to you, you make some for your-

self. Among human beings, according to their constitution, every nature craves its due ration of trouble and sorrow; and if real troubles and sorrows are omitted, imagination must supply them; or if it cannot do so, one pines with pessimism, with general, unintelligent tearfulness. Or are these still "Harzthränen?" \*

Moritz, instead of uplifting and strengthening himself by your cheerfulness, is dragging you down into the sea of tears. In this grief, which cannot be assuaged, both of you betray a quite distinct lack of faith and submission, dispute it as much as you like—a doubt of reunion, of eternal life, a doubt of God's love. I am so very sorry that Moritz has not kept the joyful, trustful disposition which he showed in the beginning. Would your grief be like this if Marie had gone away on a journey for "an indefinite period"? If it is different, then you do not *believe* what you profess: you only hope and wish it. And if you furthermore knew that she was happy and content on that journey? Then, too, were you not almost constantly separated in times past, without knowing *when* you would see each other again—or *whether*, at least in this world? With faith as I understand it, and as I ask God to give it, it is inconceivable to me that one can be inconsolable. When I write to Moritz I have the impulse to take him by the shoulders and shake him right heartily.

Cordial remembrances to your parents. I must go out now, and have written these lines to-day in haste, while drinking salted milk as in Reinfeld. My head was so very full of business last evening, and still is, that I cannot write you freely. A cordial farewell, my love,

\* Compare letter of February 17, 1847.



and do not weep so much; and yet if you do, at least let me know of it. B.

*March 1st.*

SCHÖNHAUSEN, *March 4, 1847.*

MY DEAR HEART,—On my return from the District Diet yesterday I was very agreeably surprised to find your letter, which I did not expect till to-day. All sorts of unforeseen police matters prevented my answering it this morning before the mail closed; and now that a lively gallop on Mousquetaire has rid me of vexation and headache (consequences of the bad wine I had to drink yesterday with the delegates), I find myself for the first time in undisturbed *tête-à-tête* with your dear letter.

You felt, no doubt, that you were a very sensible person when you beheld your cold-blooded, skeptical friend in the cloud-land of superstition and interpretation of dreams. Strange enough it is, too; but who will explain the contradictions that exist in the nature of every individual? Hobbes, the materialistic atheist, could not sleep alone for fear of ghosts. Now although I, trusting in God's supreme power and submissive to his will, am not exactly afraid of supernatural contacts and influences—at least not more than of those which are corporeal—yet I do believe, to express it in Hamlet's hackneyed words, that there are many things between heaven and earth of which our philosophers do not dream, or, if they do *dream* of them, of which they can give no satisfactory account. Yes, in the deeper sense, all in us, and out of us, belongs in this category, and the expression "a miracle" always draws from me an inward smile at the lack of logic, for we see miracles every minute, and nothing but miracles. Those for which we are blunted by daily usage



we account the natural course of affairs, that every precocious fool thinks he can see through to the bottom; but if something attracts our notice that is new and apparently foreign to the course of the great machine hitherto observed, though not explained, then we cry out "miracles," as though this were the only manifestation that we could not comprehend.

One's neighbors in the country are really very burdensome. There I sit quite pleasantly at my writing; somebody knocks at the door unannounced. "Death! I know that is——. Oh, that the tedious sneak should break in upon this throng of memories." As an individual he may be excellent; as a companion he was intolerable to me to-day. I made a face like a prison-door, said not a word, but he sat for wellnigh two hours, told me commonplace stories, and talked to me about railways and horticulture. I have become quite unsociable—a sign that I am growing old; I do not like to be disturbed in my daily customs and comfort. Immediately after he had left, resounded the command to Hildebrand (my valet) that from dinner till sunset I am never at home to any one. How different that used to be!—any person with whom I could talk without formality I was glad to see in my house at any hour, could always find entertainment in him, and now even a scholar like Herr . . . This was, however, at least the twentieth person to whom I was obliged to call out "Come in!" to-day, naturally with more of a growl each time. Shall you and I both be like bears in our passion to be undisturbed? In that case we shall have to go straightway to the Oie, and in winter up on the Brocken.

Your letter made a very agreeable impression on me, as being quieter, less excited than sometimes—by which

I do not in the least mean to blame the excited ones, for, on the contrary, I like excitement, and I conceive both characterizations in the sense of praise (variety, etc.). Two things in them especially reassured me: that I have never wounded you in my letters, and that you clearly and decidedly express your indulgence and patience for my possible errors in religious belief and my skepticism, and that you will love me still, even though God should lead our hearts different ways. Probably in no field is the saying "Judge not, that ye be not judged," more applicable than in matters of belief. According to my view, the latter are no impediment to earthly unions, provided neither of those who are united is a scoffer and contemner. A step further, and they yield an element of common spiritual life, provided both associates are "believers"—by which I do not mean that both believe precisely the same thing and attach themselves to the same formulated confession exactly and word for word, but only that both earnestly and humbly study and pray that they may attain to the true faith, while committing the outcome to God. I remember that when we were taking a walk from Wartensleben, we talked of some one who did not believe in the fall of man, or perhaps some other doctrine of the Bible. You were somewhat alarmed, as it seemed to me, because I did not accept your repudiation of such heresy with the same vivacity that you showed in expressing it. I do not know whether I am saying something new to you when I explain that I also have not hitherto been able to accept all that is written in the Bible. I certainly believe that it contains the word of God, but only as it has been possible for this to be transmitted and communicated to us by persons who, even the most holy, were still subject to sin and to misunderstanding. For such persons

were the Apostles and the other authors of the sacred writings, and therefore they could only apprehend and restate God's word according to their human characteristics, even when it came to them directly, as to the Apostles; still more so when it reached them, not from the Master himself, but through manifold human intermediation, as the Evangelist Luke. You know that Paul was not converted till after Christ's death; that this Evangelist was a later disciple of the Apostles and other disciples. Therefore, when I am in doubt, I attach more value to passages from the writings of the Apostles themselves than to those of Paul and Luke. You will urge in answer the outpouring of the Holy Ghost upon those authors and the subsequent communication of it to their disciples, and that it is presumptuous to wish to judge of the Scriptures according to individual opinion; and in this you may perhaps be right. If it is not distasteful to you, I will tell you by word of mouth more about this subject and the foundation of my view: the written word always says too much for me, I think, and is so easily stretched by interpretation and misunderstood. Then, too, I should like to avoid even the appearance of wishing to draw you over into religious agitation like that which is going on in myself. I am so glad that you hold fast immovably to that which you have recognized as being true, and I should account it a sin on my part if the least item of your faith were shaken through my fault. I have uttered the foregoing merely for the sake of candor, and not as a result that I had won in faith, but as a way-station where I find myself at present, and from which God will help me on, as he has helped me hitherto. Be not anxious and concerned, therefore, at anything that might seem to you at all harmful or skeptical in that confession; in

so doing you would be beginning to judge me: but recall, rather, what my prospects were on that Whitsuntide when we stood at the window together in Cardemin, and what a change has taken place in me since then.

Rome was not built in a day, and all the houses in it do not look alike, any more than do the inmates, who are, nevertheless, all Romans. As for my journey, I can say, unfortunately, that it certainly will not take place before the 20th. The Elbe is harmless for the present, it is true, but with the great quantities of unmelted snow in the mountains, as soon as the thaw becomes more decided a second freshet cannot fail to occur. If this comes after the 20th, I shall not suffer myself to be detained by it: I am tired of waiting. But before that I have too much other business to be able to get away. I should be obliged to be here on the 18th, as a meeting of the estates preparatory to the 20th takes place on the 19th, and, accordingly, should have to leave Reinfeld on the 16th. On Monday, the 8th, I must be in Magdeburg, where I have business with Gerlach. Three long-drawn-out sessions here in the neighborhood and a matter with the minister of justice, which will necessitate a stop of several days in Berlin, are postponable, yet unavoidable, impediments, which, if I should disregard them now, would keep me the longer away from you after the 20th. Besides, I have to attend to some rather far-reaching literary work, as the estates of several districts of the province have intrusted to me the development of a plan I suggested three months ago for transforming our judicial system, and chosen me as their representative in Berlin in this matter—a very honorable, yet very burdensome office. If I had foreseen three months ago how it was going to be with us, I should have postponed the reform plans some-

what; but now they must be submitted to the King before the meeting of the Landtag, as the matter will probably come up for action in that [body]. . . .

I was grieved to reach the conclusion to-day, and not for the first time, that I must get rid of Odin if we come into closer relations with B., for the foolish beast simply cannot stand any Jews, either genuine or baptized, and gives the rein to this prejudice so unrestrainedly and bloodthirstily that he has to be chained up as long as a descendant of the Patriarchs tarries in the neighborhood of the house—which shows him to be a very sharp-eyed connoisseur of national peculiarities. Your mother's joke on my dislike of B. was not misunderstood, even if I did interpret it as a half-serious caution. Perhaps I should have done otherwise if you had made the remark, however much of a Pomeranian I have become. It is impossible to tell from the written word whether the ink, while it was wet, mirrored a bantering eye or the lines of anxious seriousness, and from ladies I am accustomed (I tell you in confidence) to regard many a saying as serious which in a man's mouth I should never take to be so.

Enclosed I send you a rather insignificant view of the house here, as it looks on the gabled side when seen from the garden. The windows on this side belong to uninhabited rooms, in spite of the fact that they command a wide and quite pleasant view over the smooth plain of the Elbe Valley and the higher banks on the farther side.

Day before yesterday I received from Moritz a very dear letter, much more calm and clear than the last, about which he himself speaks with disapproval. Do me the favor, my heart, not to excite each other to tears; events

in themselves have done more than enough in that direction; but rather let each of you give courage to the other, make your music in a major key, and for my sake stop getting pale and thin, lest on the 23d I stand for a quarter of an hour shaking my head in front of you before I embrace you. It is an abuse of privilege which our father-confessor is guilty of with you that he uses your eyes as watering-pots for the plants of his sorrow. . . .

So, then, you think Senfft considered it a "good deal" that a girl could be clever and good and pious: I thought they all were that. Now, what are the others to me? I have nothing more to do with them, except perhaps your waiting-maid; see to it, then, that she does not belong in the opposite category, for should she be transferred from Reinfeld to this house she would have a long return trip. Even without taking that into account, I find it very hard to make up my mind to dismiss people, once I have taken them into my service, and I hope you will have the same principles with respect to the female part of the regiment. The atmosphere here preserves the rabble. Bellin is a peasant's son from the village here, who began as stable-boy in my father's employ, and has been forty years in our service—thirty-two of them as inspector. His wife was born in our service, a daughter of the former, sister of the present, shepherd. The latter and the master-tiler, who also will soon be sixty, are of the second generation in service here, and their fathers held the same positions under my grandfather and father. The gardener's family, unfortunately, died out last year with the decease of a childless man of seventy-five, who had inherited the position from his father. The herdsman knew my father when he was an ensign; when my father died the land-steward and huntsman resigned their offices on account



of the infirmities of age, both after serving almost fifty years—the son of Nimrod after I had been obliged to assure him that he should have the shooting of all the hares that I needed for the kitchen, although the poor bungler can no longer see well enough to do it. Even among the birds of passage, the maids, are some whom I have known for ten years, and perhaps longer. I cannot deny that I am somewhat proud that this conservative principle has prevailed so many years in this house, in which my ancestors lived for centuries in the same rooms, where they were born and where they died, such as the pictures in the house and in the church show them to have been—from knights in clanking mail to the cavaliers of the Thirty Years' War, with their long hair and pointed beards; then the wearers of gigantic periwigs who strutted about with *talons rouges* on these boards, and the queue-wearing trooper who fell in Frederick the Great's battles, down to the degenerate offspring who now lies at the feet of a black-haired girl.

*Les extrêmes se touchent, mais ils se brisent*, is one of those French sayings whose apparent literal truth hides the inner falsity, and which are invented by people who want to put the responsibility for their own baseness upon a necessary law of nature. The premise is true—they do touch each other—but they belong together, too, like ink upon white paper, like the hard seal upon the soft wax. Similar characters repel or bore each other, for with them sharp corner hits upon sharp corner, and hollow upon hollow, without being able to close together and penetrate each other; whereas, in the case of dissimilar characters, each is complementary to the other, stimulates, and strikes chords hitherto silent. Two hard stones do not grind together, nor do two soft ones, and, in the case of people, the



one must be soft where the other is hard, if they are to grind well together.

I smiled a little at your protestations about Albert's\* innocence and harmlessness, and am moved by this to repeat that I am not jealous of men merely as such, even if Bruno should spend two weeks in Reinfeld. When I say men, merely as such, I wish to imply that one may also have men as female friends.† I am very grateful for the letters and the remembrance of your and my dear parents. Please give them my cordial salutations, and say I shall reply in a few days. I am almost afraid you are going to lose your Thursday's letter this time, for, day after tomorrow, Sunday, I shall be in the royal military service; from Monday, perhaps, till Tuesday noon, in Magdeburg, without a moment's leisure. I can only wish that this reach you on Sunday, as it should; but as it starts on Friday, I fear its bad luck will keep it on the way till Tuesday. A cordial good-bye, *ma reine*, and be patient with your faithful slave, who, until the 20th, serves two masters.

Your  
B.

SCHÖNHAUSEN, *March 7, '47.*

DEAREST,—I really have not time to write you, as I explained in my last letter. Until four o'clock I was standing with sword at my side, in the Wust churchyard, in order to prevent what is called a *Controllversammlung* [mass-meeting], over almost four hundred men of the first reserve; then I came here just to mount Mousquetaire and ride four miles at a breakneck pace, as a ship has gone down beyond Arneburg, and in the efforts to save the crew

\* V. Below-Reddentin, nephew of Herr v. Puttkamer-Reinfeld.

† Explained in letter of March 16, 1847.

a quarrel with the natives ensued on account of injuries to the dike. Now I am indeed rather lame in the hip, and *broken down*, but, as you may infer from the foregoing, very well—which I assure you hereby, as also that I have read the last word of your letter, *foi de gentilhomme*, at the risk that this letter will smell as strongly of horse as the previous one did of musk. The musk came, by the way, from Mecklenburg, and, with some knowledge of aromatics, you would have made the discovery that it was the odor of no medicinal musk, but of *patchouli*, the most horrid of all *parfums*, that all the letters of my friend Dewitz are scented with, and I presumably tore a sheet from one of these to use as an *enveloppe* for my letter. He who receives musk into his house—he who is so far gone—he writes no more. Now I must once more protest in the most solemn manner against the idea that you, my darling, have pained me in any way. If anything of that sort was contained in my previous letter, always remember that I chat with you just as I happen to feel, and it may very well be that a cloud lay on my inner self that day which not even the thought of you could quite dispel—whether it was business trouble, or that mysterious distress which often, *sans rime et sans raison*, arises in us, and which some lovely poem, perhaps by Lenau, represents as unconscious remorse for sins committed in a previous existence.

Writing is a sad makeshift, and the cold, black ink-marks are exposed to so many misunderstandings and misinterpretations, giving occasion to useless anxiety and sorrow, especially to my dear Johanna, who examines the lines with such scrutinizing care, to see whether she may not find in them something to feed her appetite for distress. Do you not fancy all possible disasters—that I am sick, have

been offended by this thing or that, have scolded you in dead earnest, etc.? If you could only see how contentedly I smile, or, at least, how contented I appear, while I am writing to you, chatting with you without thought of harm; and if I make a campaign against your fondness for grieving, 'tis only a sham battle, with blank cartridges, not designed to kill or wound. That being premised, I tell you that the poem "Oh, do not look so bright and bless'd" is a right pretty poem, but in my estimation, like nearly all poetry, is not adapted to be applied to one's own life and to screen one's own little perversities. It is a weak-hearted poem, with which I contrast the verse of the trooper's song, "Unless you will take your life in your hand, you can never win the prize of life itself"—put your life at stake, if you would know what it means to live—which I elucidate as follows in my own fashion: With dutiful trust in God, dig in the spurs, and let life, like a wild horse, take you flying over hedge and ditch, resolved to break your neck, and get fearless, inasmuch as you must some time part from all that is dear to you on earth—though not forever. If Grief is near, well, let him come on, but until he arrives do not merely "*look* bright and bless'd," but *be* it, too; and when sorrow comes upon you, bear it with dignity—that is to say, with submission and hope. Until that time, however, I will have nothing to do with *Mr. Grief*—nothing more than is implied in submission to God's will. If "fairest things soonest fleet and die," then that is a reason the more for not spoiling the time while they are yours by self-torment about the possibility of their loss: be thankful for them, rather, and appreciative. Moreover, it is not even a true saying, and the reason why "fair things" appear to us so transitory is found in our own insatiableness, which, instead of thanking God for the blessing we have

enjoyed, thinks only of lamenting the fact that we have it no longer, whereas others never had it at all. Precisely similar to this is the experience of young gentlemen who destroy so-called friendships by lending and borrowing money. The receiver, so soon as he has used up the loan, invariably ceases to be grateful for the complaisance, though it be marked, of the other who lent him the money; on the contrary, he is only embittered when the latter asks to be repaid, and generally becomes an enemy of the lender. When I was a student, how angry I used to get over tailors and bootmakers! When they wanted their bills paid, I considered it the most irritating presumption, instead of being grateful for the credit they had extended.

Moreover, the "rose of the gardens" is happier than that "of the desert," for even to be but "a moment cherished" is better than to "live and die in vestal silence." "A moment cherished and then cast away." I have often loved (if love it may be called) in that fashion, and others have restored them to favor once more, as was to be expected. "Worshipped while blooming—when she fades forgot"? There are qualities that never fade; so I shall worship you as long as I live, because you will never give up blooming.  
*Et quand même!*

When did I reproach you with having an icy heart? I must have been in a terribly mendacious mood then. It is not true in the least: I love the temperature of your heart, and yet I shiver so easily in any place that is not warm. How can your mother think that I misunderstood the note, or even took offence at it? It is really high time for me to see you; otherwise you will represent me as a complete tyrannical monster in the pictures your fancy creates.

You hurt my feelings somewhat in being so much surprised when people like Lepsius and others respect and

love you, etc., for you thus indirectly express the opinion that you esteem me a man devoid of taste, since I entertain for you much stronger feelings of—respect is too weak a word for me; worship untrue and sacrilegious. You must, on the contrary, look with contempt upon every one who does not know enough to appreciate your merit; and to every one who has not yet proposed to you, or would not at least like to, you must say, “Sir, the fact is that Herr von B. loves me, and this proves that every male person who does not adore me is a blockhead without discernment.” Why should not Lepsius worship you? ’Tis his duty and obligation. Don’t be so insultingly modest, as though I, after wandering around among the rose-gardens of North Germany for ten years, had finally grabbed at a buttercup with both hands.

Gather, then, from this very instructive letter, 1, that I am tired; 2, that I am in good health, very; 3, that last Friday morning you did not write me silly stuff, but an amiable letter; 4, that I did not misapply to myself anything you said, and most heartily believe that you do care for me; 5, that if we were together now, I should fall at your feet, seize both your hands, and cry, “*Jeannetke, ich liebe dir!*” 6, *ch’io ti voglio ben’ assai*; 7, that I love you; 8, *que je t’adore, mon ange*; 9, to-morrow morning I go to Magdeburg, with Wartensleben of Carow, hold a long conference with Gerlach, dine there, buy little trees under whose shade you shall some time wander—ditto cigars and other things. A fortnight hence, on Saturday (Rupertus), I flee away to a remote distance, and the following Tuesday, on Everard’s (!! ) day, I repose on your heart. Forgive this unworthy scrawl, give my cordial greetings to your parents, and caress Finette for me, to keep your mother’s heart favorably disposed. Good-night, beloved!

How frightfully indistinct the writing is in this letter! I can scarcely read it myself; forgive me, but I had to go to sleep quickly to-night, and was in such a hurry.

SCHÖNHAUSEN, *March 11, 1847.*

CZARNA KOTKO, MILA DUSZO!—If the meaning of the foregoing incantation should not be clear to you, in spite of the proximity of the heathen Kassuben, then look upon it for the present as a rebus which I shall explain orally, and now only add the remark that I make a practice of busying myself with the reading of grammars after dinner, as an aid to digestion, and to-day took up a Polish one. Excuse this variegated ink, too; but I can't get any other at the moment, for Bellin, who has charge of everything, is not at home. Your letter with the little house on it, and the still smaller people staring at the bare autumnal tree, did not frighten me at all, as I, true to my often expounded principles, never let myself take fright prematurely through apprehensions that I make myself. I merely concluded from the Stolp postmark that you had suddenly gone to Reddentin, and wished to inform me of that in the improbable event of my earlier departure. My sensations were untroubled and glad when I caught sight of your little rose seal, and aired themselves in an exclamation which my Polish grammarian would translate perhaps by *pilna panna*, "a diligent young lady." Your letter-bag was not empty last Thursday, I trust, though I absent-mindedly took with me to Magdeburg the hurried letter that I wrote Sunday evening when very tired, instead of posting it in Genthin, and so it did not start on its travels till Tuesday morning. As an offset, it was in my pocket when I visited Gerlach, and can tell you how I surrendered myself to sad



but not comfortless memories of last summer, both there and in the garden by the railway, where we took supper. In a business conference lasting several hours I had occasion once more to admire Gerlach, who was not merely witty as ever, but also the practical jurist, with rare knowledge of the law and general affairs. My stay continued, contrary to my intention, till day before yesterday, Tuesday, as our session was protracted until the train had left, so that I did not find your love-token until twenty-four hours after its arrival here. Be on your guard against Kautschlow\* and Reddis: I have great respect for scarlet and nervous fevers, and am only glad that you are not afraid of them, since fear makes one more susceptible to contagion. Take every precaution, but *sans peur et sans reproche*: at least, always be the former, and we will both strive for the latter. Fear does not help matters, makes one confused and helpless on the approach of danger, and is a lack of trust in God's providence. Very wisely spoken, and yet I do not believe that I was never afraid. . . .

Farewell, my angel; may the others guard you.

Your faithful

B.

You will not be able to ride Luna; ride you must, though, even if it is to be on me. In 280 hours I shall be with you; *mais l'homme propose, Dieu dispose*.

SCHÖNHAUSEN, March 14, 1847.

JEANNE LA MÉCHANTE!—What is the meaning of this? A whole week has passed since I heard a syllable from you, and to-day I seized the confused mass of letters with genuine impatience—seven official communications, a bill,

\* That is, Alt-Kolziglow.



two invitations, one of which is for a theatre and ball at Greifenberg, but not a trace of Zuckers [the Reinfeld post-office] and "Hochwohlgeboren." \* I could not believe my eyes, and had to look through the letters twice; then I set my hat quite on my right ear and took a two hours' walk on the highway in the rain, without a cigar, assailed by the most conflicting sentiments—"a prey to violent emotions," as we are accustomed to say in romances. I have got used to receiving my two letters from you regularly every week, and when once we have acquired the habit of a thing, we look upon that as our well-won right, an injury to which enrages us. If I only knew against whom I should direct my wrath—against Böge, against the post-office, or against you, *la chatte la plus noire*, inside and out. And why don't you write? Are you so exhausted with the effort you made in sending two letters at a time on Friday of last week? Ten days have gone by since then—time enough to rest yourself. Or do you want to let me writhe, while you feast your eyes on my anxiety, tigress! after speaking to me in your last letters about scarlet and nervous fevers, and after I had laid such stress on my maxim of never believing in anything bad before it forces itself upon me as incontestable? We adhere firmly to our maxims only so long as they are not put to the test; when that happens we throw them away, as the peasant did his slippers, and run off on the legs that nature gave us. If you have the disposition to try the virtue of my maxims, then I shall never again give utterance to any of them, lest I be caught lying; for the fact is that I do really feel somewhat anxious. With fevers in Reddis, to let ten days pass without writing is very horrible of you, if you are well.

\* "Right honorable," a common form of address on letters. B. refers more than once to her distinctive way of writing this title.

Or can it be that you did not receive on Thursday, as usual, my letter that I mailed on Tuesday in Magdeburg, and, in your indignation at this, resolved not to write to me for another week? If *that* is the state of affairs, I can't yet make up my mind whether to scold or laugh at you. The worst of it now is that, unless some lucky chance brings a letter from you directly to Stolp, I shall not have any before Thursday, for, as I remember it, there is no mail leaving you Saturday and Sunday, and I should have received Friday's to-day. If you have not sworn off writing altogether and wish to reply to this letter, address me at Naugard. . . .

Had another visitor, and he stayed to supper and well into the night—my neighbor, the town-counsellor Gärtner. People think they must call on each other Sunday evening, and can have nothing else to do. Now that all is quiet in the night, I am really quite disturbed about you and your silence, and my imagination, or, if not that, then the being whom you do not like to have me name, shows me with scornful zeal pictures of everything that *could* happen. Johanna, if you were to fall sick now, it would be terrible beyond description. At the thought of it, I fully realize how deeply I love you, and how deeply the bond that unites us has grown into me. I understand what you call loving much. When I think of the possibility of separation—and possible it is still—I should never have been so lonely in all my dreary, lonely life.

What would Moritz's situation be, compared with that?—for he has a child, a father, a sister, dear and intimate friends in the neighborhood. I have no one within forty miles with whom I should be tempted to talk more than just that which politeness demands; only a sister—but a happily married one with children is really one no longer,

at least for a brother who is single. For the first time I am looking the possibility straight in the eyes that you might be taken away from me, that I might be condemned to inhabit these empty rooms without a prospect of your sharing them with me, with not a soul in all the surrounding region who would not be as indifferent to me as though I had never seen him. I should, indeed, not be so devoid of comfort in myself as of old, but I should also have lost something that I used not to know—a loving and beloved heart, and at the same time be separated from all that which used to make life easy in Pomerania through habit and friendship. A very egotistical line of thought and way of looking at things this discloses, you will say. Certainly, but Pain and Fear are egotists, and, in cases like that referred to, I never think the deceased, but only the survivors, are to be pitied. But who speaks of dying? All this because you have not written for a week; and then I have the assurance to lecture you for gloomy forebodings, etc.! If you had only not spoken of the deadly fevers in your last letter. In the evening I am always excited, in the loneliness, when I am not tired. To-morrow, in bright daylight, in the railway carriage, I shall perhaps grasp your possible situation with greater confidence.

Be rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing instant in prayer. All the angels will guard you, my beloved heart, so that we shall soon meet again with joy. Farewell, and salute your parents. I wrote your father this morning. Your faithful BISMARCK.

BERLIN, *March* 16, '47.

CHÈRE ET BONNE,—Strange to say, I have just received at this place your dear letter of Thursday, after it had gone

astray through a blunder of the Genthin post-office. Behold me now thoroughly ashamed of all my excitement of day before yesterday, with the greatest desire to thrash the whole postal service if I had it before me in person; with a brilliant justification, too, of my dear Johanna and of my principles touching useless anxiety—if these were only more firm. I write you only a couple of lines on the jump, so that you may know what has become of your letter and to comply with your pressing request for an immediate explanation of my surprising expression concerning “men as women friends.” There are two kinds of jealousy, which are really quite different sensations. The basis of one is mistrust in regard to the honor and constancy of the other party; that of the other is a certain sense of being for the moment or constantly put in the background by the preoccupation of the other party with some women friends, flowers, birds, books, dogs, etc. I do not know precisely what words I wrote, but presumably I intended to say no more than that I am liable to the second kind of jealousy, which I should prefer to call a morbid sensitiveness, but not to the first, which seems to me to be irreconcilable with true love. That I had really already had occasion to feel the second kind with you, I presume I did not say, or, at any rate, did not mean to say. . . .

Your faithful

B.

KNIEPHOF, Wednesday Evening, *April 28, '47.*

This morning, my belovedst beloved, I arrived at this place, after spending the night with three officers who knew me, without my knowing them, and with a pretty young lady, who, in reply to my polite offer to exchange my very comfortable corner for her seat in the middle of the coupé,

said, in an irritated tone, "I cannot ride backward, and, besides, this place was assigned to me"—whereupon I respectfully held my peace. In Cöslin there was rioting—even after twelve, the streets so beset with crowds that we got through them with difficulty and only under the protection of a part of the national guard, that had been called out. Bakers and butchers looted, three grain-dealers' houses ruined, window-smashing; and so forth. I should have liked to stay there. The uncultivated meadows and the gooseberries are a soft green here; bird-cherry-trees and elders, too, have leaves the size of a ducat, and the ground under the trees and bushes of the Dornberg (park) was thickly covered with blue, white, and yellow flowers, parading in all the colors of my coat-of-arms, as though for a parting salutation. On the whole region, with its grass-green waters and oaks without foliage, there lay the mood of tenderness and sadness, as I, after much vexatious business, paid my parting call about sunset on the places which were dear to me and where I had often passed dreamy and despondent hours. On the spot where I had thought of building a new house lay the skeleton of a horse: by the very build of the bones I recognized the remains of my faithful Caleb, who for seven years bore me, glad or sad, wild or lazy, many a mile on his back. I thought of the heaths and fields, the lakes and the houses—and the people in them—that we two flew by: my life unrolled itself before me back to the days when as a child I played on this spot; the rain trickled gently through the bushes, and I stared for a long time at the dull sunset, filled to overflowing with sadness and regret for the lazy indifference and blind lust of pleasure in which I squandered all the rich endowment of my youth, my spirit, my property, my health, without purpose and without profit,

until I looked to you, my heart, to receive into the haven of your unprofaned heart the wreck whose rich cargo I had wantonly and lavishly thrown overboard by the handful. I went home much depressed; every tree that I had planted, every oak below whose rustling top I had lain in the grass, seemed to reproach me for surrendering them to the hands of strangers, and all of my workmen did this more plainly—whom I found gathered before my door, to complain to me about the present hard times and their anxiety for the future under the lessee. “Much will he care if we are sick and miserable!” and with that they represented to me how long they had served my father, and the old gray-heads shed bright tears, and I was not far from doing so. I did not know anything to say, either, by way of excuse for myself, for had I taken care of my property, instead of letting strangers manage it for me, and had I been as careful as I was wasteful, then it would not have become a financial necessity to lease it now—or probably at any time. It makes me decidedly uneasy in my conscience to surrender to the covetousness of a lessee these people whose defence God intrusted to me. . . . Cordial remembrances to our mother. *God bless you. Our love is the bright star that shines through the dreary darkness of my soul!*\*  
B.

BERLIN, May 2, '47.

On our marriage, I have just had a thorough talk with your father, and found him disposed to celebrate it at the appointed time, entirely without display, as a mere wedding ceremony; also have notified my relatives that it cannot be otherwise on account of your mother's condition. Many remembrances to her.

\* English in the original.



SCHÖNHAUSEN, *May 5, 1847.*

BEST LOVED,—At sunset I came from an inspection of the dikes, wet to the skin; found your letter and your mother's, and was quite put to shame by your love, with which I am covered as your letter is with yellow sealing-wax.

My cordial thanks for your very warm, dear letter. . . .

Your adventure with Brünette makes me anxious, and I beg of you earnestly not to ride her again until I come back. It is possible that Groth has made her fretful; still more probable that she finds riding about the place tiresome, and will go more quietly outside. In any case, it seems the best thing to do to send her to Stolp until my return, both to make her gentle and to give her as much exercise as her health requires. I shall avoid telling your father about this danger, and say to him merely that she must have exercise, and can get it nowhere else but in Stolp. I am not in a mood for writing a great deal, not so much for the reason that I have only six hours before my departure as because my gall is stirred up and takes away my thoughts. I received a piece of news as I was writing, with the details of which I shall not trouble you beyond observing that a rather important pecuniary loss grows out of ——'s rank faithlessness. In spite of this confession of my wrathful emotions, I must scold you for yours in reference to Brünette. Allow yourself to be propitiated by the consideration that she did not "mean it badly." She had positively no vicious intention to vex or harm you personally, but obeyed impulses of her excited blood and of her impatience. Look upon her as an instrument that you do not play in the right way, or that is out of tune owing to the weather.

When you "long" for me too much, and discontent with



the short interruption of our companionship overcomes you, do not think then of what could be better and pleasanter for the moment, but of misfortune and pain which might be present, but are not; think that I might be dead, instead of absent, or might lie sick for months, or—or, etc.—in short, think of everything we both have to thank God for, if it is only because a friend was given to you who is so wise in admonition for you and so unwise in thought and action for himself. In your actions, follow my words, not my works. Learn to take grateful pleasure, too, in the joy you have had, and do not cry, as little children do, “More!” the moment it stops. I found my sister well, though still much enfeebled and languid in her way of holding herself and walking. She is very eager for you, and her heart goes out towards you. Your letter has no inharmonious sound whatever: it is so charmingly frank and confiding that I have a feeling about it as though you were saying all that to me in the sofa-corner. This reply is equally confused and hurried, but I am making haste to go to sleep, as in this respect I have not had my rightful allowance the last four nights; otherwise I shall sleep too late to-morrow.

Your faithful                      B.

BERLIN, *May 8, 1847.*

DEAREST, ONLY BELOVED JUANITA, BETTER HALF OF MYSELF,—I should like to begin my letter with every possible form of address through which I may win your favor, for I am in sore need of your forgiveness. I will not leave you to guess the reason why, lest you should imagine something worse than that I have been chosen to the Landtag and have accepted it. Although I hope I shall be able to go with your father to see you at Whitsun-

tide, this makes, nevertheless, an essential change in all our plans for our next meeting. Let me tell you, in my own defence, how this came to pass.

One of our deputies, Brauchitsch, is so ill that he can no longer attend the meetings. I have the first right to succeed to his seat, but might have declined it, when the next substitute would have been called upon. But the Magdeburg estates, when the first place among the six substitutes became vacant, instead of adopting the usual practice and letting the second, and so on, each move up one grade, and filling the sixth position by a new election, by way of exception immediately selected me as the first of the six, although I am quite new in the province, and had never been a substitute at all. They were moved to do this partly for the reason that they had a quite unusual degree of confidence in me, partly because the second, who would have advanced to the first position, was held to be incompetent. He would now become deputy if I declined. Moreover, the estates tried by every available means to put me into the Landtag instead of the first president. Brauchitsch himself, also, who was already on the road to recovery, resigned with special regard to my becoming his substitute, and the other deputies likewise urged him to do so for the same reason, and expressly desired my election. I write you all this to make it clear to you that I could not decline the call without positively offending the Magdeburg estates and destroying every prospect I have which is based upon my relations with the estates. So I ask you again to forgive me for accepting the thing, and in so doing cancelling the plans for our reunion next week. Think how entirely possible it was for my election to have taken place on the 11th of April, and how many happy and cherished hours of companionship we should have lost in that

case—hours that are precious in memory, too. Be my strong Johanna, and thank God for all that has come to us, without complaint and sorrow about that which you might like to have different. We shall often be obliged to learn to set the cup down when it tastes the best; to rejoice in what we have drunk, and courageously to renounce what we must leave in it. . . . Your faithful B.

SCHÖNHAUSEN, May 10, 1847.

TRÈS CHÈRE JEANNETON,—It sounds rather *hypokrite* when I speak of my pain at thought of our prolonged separation, as I had it in my power, strictly speaking, to let the Landtag go hang. But you yourself know best what to think of it, and I feel that with you I do not need excuses. Last night I had a disquieting dream about you and three horses: I hope you are still *Jeanne la sage*, so far as riding goes. Your faithful B.

BERLIN, Friday, May 15, '47.

DEAR HEART,—Your father gave me your letter this morning at the session, and in consequence I hardly know what subject was discussed, or, at least, lacked energy to form a clear, conscious conception of it. My thoughts were in Reinfeld and my heart full to overflowing of care. I am submissive in all that may happen, but I cannot say that I should be submissive with gladness. The chords of my soul become relaxed and toneless when I think of all possibilities. I am not, indeed, of that self-afflicting sort that carefully and artfully destroys its own hope and constructs fear, and I do not believe that it is God's will to separate us now—for every reason I cannot believe it; but

I know that you are suffering, and I am not with you, and yet, if I were there, I could perhaps contribute something to your tranquillity, to your serenity, were it only that I should ride with you—for you have no one else for that. It is so contrary to all my views of gallantry, not to speak of my sentiments for you, that any power whatever should keep me here when I know that you are suffering and I could help and relieve you; and I am still at war with myself to determine what my duty is before God and man. If I am not sooner there, then it is fairly certain that I shall arrive in Reinfeld with your father at Whitsuntide, probably a week from to-morrow. The cause of your illness may lie deeper, or perhaps it is only that the odious Spanish flies have affected you too powerfully. Who is this second doctor you have called in? The frequent changing of doctors, and, on one's own authority, using between-times all sorts of household remedies, or remedies prescribed for others, I consider very bad and wrong. Choose one of the local doctors in whom you have the most confidence, but keep to him, too; do what he prescribes and nothing else, nothing arbitrary; and, if you have not confidence in any of the local men, we will both try to carry through the plan of bringing you here, so that you may have thorough treatment under the direction of Breiers, or some one else. The conduct of your parents in regard to medical assistance, the obstinate refusal of your father, and, allied to that, your mother's arbitrary changing and fixed prejudices, in matters which neither of them understand, seem to me, between ourselves, indefensible. He to whom God has intrusted a child, and an only child at that, must employ for her preservation all the means that God has made available, and not become careless of them through fatalism or self-sufficiency. If writing tires you,

ask your mother to send us news. Moreover, it would seem to me very desirable if one of your friends could be prevailed upon to go to you until you are better. Whether a doctor can help you or not—forgive me, but you cannot judge of that by your feelings. God's help is certainly decisive, but it is just He who has given us medicine and physician that, through them, His aid may reach us; and to decline it in this form is to tempt Him, as though the sailor at sea should deprive himself of a helmsman, with the idea that God alone can and will give aid. If He does *not* help us through the means He has placed within our reach, then there is nothing left to do but to bow in silence under His hand. If you should be able to come to Zimmerhausen after Whitsuntide, please write to that effect beforehand if possible. If your illness should become more serious, I shall certainly leave the Landtag, and even if you are confined to your bed, I shall be with you. At such a moment I shall not let myself be restrained by such questions of etiquette—that is my fixed resolve. You may be sure of this, that I have long been helping you pray that the Lord may free you from useless despondency and bestow upon you a heart cheerful and submissive to God—and upon me, also; and I have the firm confidence that He will grant our requests and guide us both in the paths that lead to Him. Even though yours may often go to the left around the mountain, and mine to the right, yet they will meet beyond.

The salt water has already gone from here. If you are too weak for riding, then take a drive every day. When you are writing to me, and begin to feel badly in the least, stop immediately; give me only a short bulletin of your health, even if it is but three lines, for, thank Heaven, words can be dispensed with between us—they cannot add or take away anything, since our hearts look into each

other, eye to eye, to the very bottom, and though here and there, behind a fold, some new thing is discovered, a strange thing it is not. Dear heart, what stuff you talk (excuse my rudeness) when you say I must not come if I would rather stop in Zimmerhausen or Angermünde at Whitsuntide! How can I take pleasure anywhere while I know that you are suffering, and, moreover, am uncertain in what degree? With us two it is a question, not of amusing and entertaining, but only of loving and being together, spiritually, and, if possible, corporeally; and if you should lie speechless for four weeks—sleep, or something else—I would be nowhere else, provided nothing but my wish were to decide. If I could only “come to your door,” I would still rather be there than with my dear sister; and the sadder and sicker you are, so much the more. But the door will not separate me from you, however ill you may be. That is a situation in which the slave mutinies against his mistress. . . .

Your faithful

B.

BERLIN, Tuesday Morning, *May 18, '47.*

DEAREST,—The last letters from Reinfeld permit me to hope that your illness is not so threatening at the moment as I feared from the first news, although I am continually beset by all possible fears about you, and thus am in a condition of rather complicated restlessness. . . . My letter in which I told you of my election you have understood somewhat, and your dear mother altogether, from a point of view differing from that which was intended. I only wanted to make my position exactly clear to you, and the apologies which to you seemed perhaps forced, as I infer from your mother's letter, you may regard as an entirely natural outflow of politeness. That I did not stand



in need of justification with you, I very well know; but also that it must affect us both painfully to see our fine plans cancelled. It was my ardent wish to be a member of the Landtag; but that the Landtag and you are fifty miles apart distressed me in spite of the fulfilment of my wish. You women are, and always will be, unaccountable, and it is better to deal with you by word of mouth than by writing. . . . I have ventured once or twice on the speaker's platform with a few words, and yesterday raised an unheard-of storm of displeasure, in that, by a remark which was not explained clearly enough touching the character of the popular uprising of 1813, I wounded the mistaken vanity of many of my own party, and naturally had all the halloo of the opposition against me. The resentment was great, perhaps for the very reason that I told the truth in applying to 1813 the sentence that any one (the Prussian people) who has been thrashed by another (the French) until he defends himself can make no claim of service towards a third person (our King) for so doing. I was reproached with my youth and all sorts of other things. Now I must go over before to-day's session to see whether, in printing my words, they have not turned them into nonsense. . . . Yours forever, B.

BERLIN, Friday, *May 21, '47.*

TRÈS CHÈRE JEANNETON,—When you receive this letter you will know that I am not to visit you in the holidays. I shall not offer "apologies," but reasons why it is not to be. I should miss certainly four, and probably five, meetings of the estates, and, according to the announcement we have received, the most important proceedings are to be expected at the coming meetings. There it may



depend upon one vote, and it would be a bad thing if that were the vote of an absentee; moreover, I have succeeded in acquiring some influence with a great number, or, at least, with some delegates of the so-called court party and the other ultra-conservatives from several provinces, which I employ in restraining them so far as possible from bolting and awkward shying, which I can do in the most unsuspected fashion when once I have plainly expressed my inclination. Then, too, I have some money affairs to arrange, for which I must make use of one of the holidays. The Landtag will either be brought to a close on the 7th of June—and in that case I should stay here until that date—or it will continue in session until all the matters have been arranged, in which event I should stay till after the decision of the important political questions which are now imminent, and shall be less conscientious about all the insignificant petitions that follow after, and await their discussion in Reinfeld. It will, besides, be pleasanter for you and the mother not to have us both—the father and me—there at one time, but relieving each other, so that you may be lonely for a shorter time. . . . Your father will tell you how I stirred up the hornet's-nest of the volunteers here lately, and the angry hornets came buzzing to attack me; on the other hand, I had as compensation that many of the older and more intelligent people drew near to me—people I did not know at all—and assured me that I had said nothing but the truth, and that was the very thing that had so incensed the people. But I must take the field now; it is ten o'clock. Please ask your father to write immediately about your health. I should so much like to hear the opinion of another person besides your mother. I am all right—only much excited. Farewell, and God guard you.

Yours altogether and forever, B.

ANGERMÜNDE, 2d Holiday, Morning, *May 24, '47.*

DEAR JOHANNA,—The result has shown once more that you are always right: instead of consoling my invalid *fiancée*, as her righteous father is doing, I am amusing myself here with my sister. But there's a hospital here, too. Frau von Derenthal has been attacked by fever here; Frau von Arnim (without the dangerous widow) is here, and so is he, Derenthal. The house resounds like the Reinfeld one, and we have to walk on tiptoe, and are terrified if a door is slammed. To-morrow morning, at eleven, the session begins again at Berlin, and probably the important matter of the government's financial report will come up at it—a field fertile of strife. I shall soon be in the same state of excitement as Thadden, who starts up restlessly at night from dreams that transport him to the Landtag, and by day forgets his dinner because of it. One becomes all the more impatient because one almost never gets a chance to express his opinion after listening six hours long to all sorts of shameless things; and if one does finally get a chance, it is when twenty other speakers have already spoken after the matter one wishes to answer, and it is forgotten. It fares with the tribune as with a beauty *en vogue* at a ball, who is always engaged for everything beforehand. . . . Your faithful B.

BERLIN, *May 26, '47.*

DEAREST,— . . . If I were only through with the Landtag and the delivery of Kniephof, could embrace you in health, and retire with you to a hunting-lodge in the heart of green forest and the mountains, where I should see no human face but yours! That is my hourly dream; the rattling wheel-work of political life is more obnoxious to

L. of C.

my ears every day. Whether it is your absence, sickness, or my laziness, I want to be alone with you in contemplative enthusiasm for nature. It may be the spirit of contradiction, which always makes me long for what I have not. And yet, I have you, you know, though not quite at hand; and still I long for you. I proposed to your father that I should go with him; we would immediately have our banns published and be married, and both come here. An apartment for married people is empty in this house, and here you could have had sensible physicians and every mortal help. It seemed to him too unbecoming. To you, too? It seems to me still the most sensible thing of all, if you are only strong enough for the trip. If the Landtag should continue longer than to the 6th of June—which I still hope it will not—let us look at the plan more carefully. . . .

Your faithful                      B.

SCHÖNHAUSEN, Friday, *May 28, '47.*

MY POOR SICK KITTEN,—. . . In regard to your illness, your father's letter has calmed my anxiety somewhat as to the danger, but yours was so gloomy and depressed that it affected me decidedly. My dear heart, such sadness as finds expression there is almost more than submission to God's will: the latter cannot, in my opinion, be the cause of your giving up the hope, I might say the wish, that you may be better, physically, and experience God's blessing here on earth as long as may be in accordance with His dispensation. You do not really mean it, either—do you, now?—when, in a fit of melancholy, you say that nothing whatever interests you genuinely, and you neither grieve nor rejoice. That smacks of Byron, rather than of Christianity. You have been sick so often in your life, and have



PRINCESS BISMARCK

1855



recovered—have experienced glad and sad hours afterwards; and the old God still lives who helped you then. Your letter stirred in me more actively than ever the longing to be at your side, to fondle you and talk with you. . . .

I do not agree with you in your opinion about July, and I would urge you strongly, too, on this point to side with me against your parents. When a wife, you are as likely to be sick as when a *fiancée*—and will be often enough, later; so why not at the beginning, likewise? I shall be with you as often as I am free from pressing engagements, so whether we are together here or in Reinfeld makes no difference in the matter. We do not mean to marry for the bright days only: your ill-health seems to me an utterly frivolous impediment. The provisional situation we are now in is the worst possible for me. I scarcely know any longer whether I am living in Schönhausen, in Reinfeld, in Berlin, or on the train. If you fall sick, I shall be a sluggard in Reinfeld all the autumn, or however long our marriage would be postponed, and cannot even associate with you quite unconstrainedly before the ceremony. This matter of a betrothed couple seventy miles apart is not defensible; and, especially when I know you are ailing, I shall take the journey to see you, of course, as often as my public and private affairs permit. It seems to me quite necessary to have the ceremony at the time already appointed; otherwise I should be much distressed, and I see no reason for it. Don't sell Brunette just now; you will ride her again soon. I must be in Berlin at noon for a consultation about plans for to-morrow. Farewell. God strengthen you for joy and hope.

Your most faithful B.

*To-morrow I'll send you a hat.\**

\* English in the original.

BERLIN, Sunday, *May 30, '47.*

TRÈS CHÈRE JEANNETON,—Your letter of day before yesterday, which I have just received, has given me profound pleasure and poured into me a refreshing and more joyous essence: your happier love of life is shared by me immediately. I shall begin by reassuring you about your gloomy forebodings of Thursday evening. At the very time when you were afflicted by them I was rejoicing in the happiness I had long missed, of living once more in a comfortable Schönhaus bed, after I had suffered for weeks from the furnished-apartments couch in Berlin. I slept very soundly, although with bad dreams—nightmares—which I ascribed to a late and heavy dinner, inasmuch as the peaceful occupations of the previous day—consisting in viewing many promising crops and well-fed sheep, together with catching up with all sorts of police arrangements relating to dike, fire, and roads—could not have occasioned them. You see how little you can depend upon the maternal inheritance of forebodings. Also in regard to the injurious effects of the Landtag excitement upon my health, I can completely reassure you. I have discovered what I needed—physical exercise—to offset mental excitement and irregular diet. Yesterday I spent in Potsdam, to be present at the water carnival—a lively picture. The great blue basins of the Havel, with the splendid surroundings of castles, bridges, churches, enlivened with several hundred gayly decorated boats, whose occupants, elegantly dressed gentlemen and ladies, bombard one another lavishly with bouquets when they can reach each other in passing or drawing up alongside. The royal pair, the whole court, Potsdam's fashionable people, and half of Berlin whirled in the skein of boats merrily, pell-mell; royalists and liberals all threw dry or wet flowers at the neighbor within reach.



Three steamboats at anchor, with musical choruses, constituted the centre of the ever-changing groups. I had the opportunity to salute, hurriedly and with surprise, and throw flowers at, many acquaintances whom I had not seen for a long time. My friend Schaffgotsch is passionately fond of walking, and he was responsible for our returning to the railway station on foot—a distance of almost three miles—at such a pace as I had not kept up in a long while. After that I slept splendidly until nine, and am in a state of physical equilibrium to-day such as I have not enjoyed for some time. As the rather dusty promenades in the Thiergarten do not give me enough of a shaking-up in the time that I have available for that purpose, Mousquetaire will arrive here to-morrow, so that he, with his lively gallop, may play the counterpart to the tune that politics is dancing in my head. My plan about Berlin and the wedding immediately, etc., was certainly somewhat adventurous when you look at it in cold blood, but I hope there will be no change from July. If I am to be tormented, as you say, with an “unendurable, dispirited, nervous being,” it is all the same in the end whether this torment will be imposed upon me by my *fiancée* or—forgive the expression—by my wife. In either case I shall try to bear the misfortune with philosophical steadfastness; for it is to be hoped that it will not be so bad that I must dig deeper and seek Christian consolation for it. Your very faithful B.

June 8, '47.

DEAR HEART,—Your last letter, which I received on Sunday evening when coming from Angermünde, was very sad once more, very sick—like sick songs. I wanted to answer immediately, but there was no one still awake to

whom I could deliver the letter so as to send it to the post-office Monday morning. Yesterday I made the acquaintance of Laura,\* who has beautiful eyes, and also saw Petronio, who won my friendship entirely by giving me the most comforting assurances in regard to the probable course of your illness. He thought that it was very desirable for you to have company, agreeable company, near you. Should I not then come to you immediately? I hope you have Hedwig now. I was delighted to hear Carl Woedtke speak French quite fluently. Where in the world did he learn it? This all occurred at a concert at Gungl's, the same place in which we ate ice and music that time after the Harz, and which I made the terminus of my usual evening ride. I have come to know Carl more intimately, and am quite edified by him—almost too intelligent for his years. . . . God bless you, my heart, and give you rest and fresh love of life: I beseech Him daily for that. My compliments to the mother. I must to the fray.

Your faithful  
B.

BERLIN, *Tuesday*.

BERLIN, Sunday, *June 13, '47*.

MY DEAR HEART,—I have been in Kniephof; half the way to you I had behind me, and yet I could not make the other half: it was hard enough for me to get away from here for two days, and, owing to the irresponsible irregularity of the lessee, who came a day later than we had agreed, as well as to financial arrangements at the Stettin bank, it took three days. The transactions in Kniephof were made disagreeable, in part provoking, by the circumstance that my lessee, who is himself the

\* Frau Lasius, née v. Puttkamer.

most harmless, good-natured person in the world, had brought with him an assistant whom all the country-side knows as the most disagreeable, malicious, litigious fellow, and who was embittered because he had offered me his assistance in this matter and I had refused him. Towards evening, after everybody, even the judge, had ordered their carriages, and when all our amicable agreement, brought about with difficulty, threatened to fall to pieces, I hit upon the lucky expedient of being so coarse to the assistant, without quite giving him cause of action, that he left the room forthwith and drove away. Thereupon I came to terms with the lessee in five minutes, and the signatures were exchanged after sunset. Taking leave of the place was very melancholy for me, when I thought how the rooms in which I had played as a child will be occupied by strangers, how all my plantations and pleasure-grounds will run riot and be overgrown, the white bridges and benches fall in pieces. It is the first time since Kniephof has been in the possession of our family that strangers live there, that it has been leased. But let by-gones be by-gones; let us look to the future. Although the report that your father has from you about your condition sounds less reassuring than Costetti's, still I share your mother's hope that the dear God will soon make you stronger in body and spirit. As soon as I but hold you again in these arms I will be your physician, and you shall get well, though you do it but for love of me. On the 19th the Landtag will be closed: the King has directed it, and we ourselves have moved for adjournment on the 19th. Then I go for a day or two to Schönhausen, from there to Kniephof to clear up the final reckoning with the lessee; so that I believe I can be in Reinfeld a day or two after St. John's. Four weeks later Sauer is to give us his blessing under the wooden

roof of the Kolziglower church; then we shall set out, stopping, if you like, in Naugard and Angermünde as long as agreeable; the same in Berlin and Schönhausen, and thence go to Vienna, Salzburg, and the Tyrol, unless you prefer another route. For the narrow-minded idea of taking no journey this year, I have utterly dismissed from my mind. So far as expenses are concerned, it would cost exactly as much next year as this, and it makes practically not the least difference, if we have decided to travel, anyway, whether it takes place this year or later. But it is quite possible that next year you will not be quite so much in the humor and in a condition for travelling as you are in this, if I have the time and disposition for it, if we are both alive still, and if—who knows what else? So, then, the upshot of it all is that we are to be married on the 24th, whether you are sick or well, and that, if the former is not the case to a greater degree than at present, we shall view the Alps from near by. *Qu'en dis-tu?* B.

BERLIN, Friday, *June* 18, '47.

MON AMIE,—(That sounds rather a little cold, but there is a member sitting next to me that looks over my arm, and reads what I write: \* *ça me gêne!*) I am writing to you, not with blood, but with the red ink we use to correct the wantonnesses of stenographers out of our speeches, and am just hearing Herr von Auerswald speak with great ardor in favor of the proposition that marriages between Jews and Christians shall be permitted. I did not get your last letter till Tuesday evening. It really gave me pleasure, although from beginning to end it contained a litany of

\* English in the original,

discontent; but there spoke a certain wholesome resentment in all these complaints, which reassures me as to your condition much more than the soft, faded, broken melancholy that found expression in a previous letter. It sounded nearly like your peevish "Na-a!" that always amuses me so. Only do not suspect me also, as you do poor Costetti, of regarding you as not really ill, but only *malade imaginaire*; moreover, that was not at all Petronio's opinion—he only said that your mental and physical conditions were interdependent, each affecting the other unfavorably. Petronio did not make the impression on me that you had led me to expect by your descriptions. He is very polite and well-bred, save that his appearance lacks the note of the *gentleman*, which the Frenchman expresses by *distingué*, the German by *vornehm*—an expression that is not quite exact. . . .

It is quite pleasant writing here: I am sitting in a portico of the white hall, the hum of the assembly behind me, and before me the view of the pleasure-garden, museum, arsenal, etc. At the moment a great tumult, ringing of the marshal's bell, calling of the roll upon the Jewish-marriage matter. That does not interest me; I must go to the wool-market. The prices have grown worse than they were in Breslau and Stettin, but we shall travel, nevertheless. Farewell.                      Your very faithful                      B.

June 22, '47.

DEAREST,—Again a very short, blustering letter, just to let you know that I am thinking of you and still love you a little bit. . . . Day before yesterday we were at our friend the King's, and I was quite spoiled by the noble company, and am now so proud that I shall always look

over your head, and only in rare moments of condescension abase my eyes to your black-gray-blue ones. With me and your father, for the rest, it is well. The bracelet has been mended. Farewell, *Jeanne la noire, la chatte !*

B.

MAGDEBURG, *July 1, 1847.*

MY DEAR HEART, — Must I prostrate myself before you, too, and beg forgiveness for not having written for a century? I do not know when the last time was; the time seems to me so tremendously long when I look back that I shall certainly be ten years older when you see me again. No velvet coat, no Jean Paul, only law, politics, party-passion, fill my head, and the whole range of the Alps, with its lakes, will not entice a glance from me if the Prussian general assembly is anywhere near. It looks so dusty, inky, and papery in my head that I can't begin to fathom such a chaos. Still, that is in my head; now my heart shall control once more, and you in it, and I will have no gods beside you. Forgive the blasphemy: I speak figuratively—must I tell you that, you Pomeranian? . . .

Now I have breakfasted, am rather sleepy, must dine at two with Gerlach to talk over newspaper projects, and at six take a train, so as to reach Schönhausen finally, which I have not seen since I was there with your father. There I must stay till to-morrow or day after to-morrow evening, depending on the matters that have to be attended to, whose nature I do not yet know, so that I shall be back in Berlin Saturday evening at the latest. There, too, I shall be busy with matters relating to founding a new paper until, on Monday, the 5th, at latest, I go to Angermünde; Tuesday, from there to Kniephof; Wednesday, the 7th, beyond—so that I request your father, if I do not write to the contrary,



to send horses to Schlawe for me the morning of Thursday, the 8th. It may be a day later, but then I shall write beforehand. Shall I then, in black velvet, with a waving ostrich-feather, sing under your window on a lukewarm evening, to the accompaniment of a cithern, "Oh, fly," etc. (which, to tell the truth, I have, as I think, a good right to sing now, with special feeling in the words, "and rest upon my"—etc.), or shall I appear at bright noon in a green riding-coat and reddish-brown gloves, and embrace you without singing or speaking? Gerlach has a plan for a trip to Bavaria and Switzerland in the middle of August, by himself, or, if possible, with Thadden, Moritz, and, perhaps, others, not to see regions, but persons (famous people). What a splendid thing that would be for our little Marie! I can hardly doubt that you will wish to join them, if anything comes of the design on the scale that Gerlach wishes, though I do not like to give up our plan about Vienna and the Tyrol, and am rather tired of seeing people and contending about politics and religion. We may perhaps agree to meet in Munich, and, if our funds suffice, go with them to Switzerland and down the Rhine. But if we have to choose between the two, I prefer Salzburg and the Tyrol to Switzerland, and then back by way of Munich and Nuremberg. Besides, paying visits to great geniuses is not always practicable for you, being a woman, and even if it were, you, whose interests are more remote from the movements of the day, will not always find, in looking at and listening to them, adequate compensation for tiresome journeys and towns. On the other hand, the travelling companionship is not to be despised, though for us twain not always without *gêne*. *Nous en parlerons plus tard. . .* God guard you.

Your own

B.



BERLIN, *July 4, '47.*

JUANININA,—Happily, I have left Schönhausen behind me, and do not expect to enter it again without you, *mon ange*. Only some business matters detain me here, which I cannot attend to to-day because it is Sunday ; but I confidently anticipate starting for Angermünde to-morrow at four, and accordingly, unless the very improbable event occurs that I am detained outrageously in Kniephof, shall arrive in Schlawe on Thursday. . . . Farewell, my heart. This is probably the last post-marked paper that you will receive from your *Bräutigam*\* (I hate the expression). Our banns were cried to-day for the first time in Schönhausen. Does that not seem strange to you? But I had learned your given names so badly that I could mention only Johanna Eleonore: the other six you must teach me better. Farewell, my heart. Many salutations to the parents.

Your very faithful                      B.

\* *Fiancé.*

LETTERS WRITTEN WHILE IN THE  
PRUSSIAN PARLIAMENT AND THE  
FEDERAL DIET, AUG., 1847-1858



SALZBURG *August 25 or 26, '47*

DEAR PARENTS,—As Johanna gave you, during my slumber\* that dates back to the Schafberg, full particulars of our experiences, I will offer you merely a token of life and remembrance on my part; otherwise you might believe I slept all the time, and not simply when Johanna is writing. I am very glad, though, that I did not act in accordance with the affectionate letter of mother which warned us so strongly against the journey, for, besides the pleasure it gives me to see these things myself, and to see Johanna's delight, I find that her health and cheerfulness grow stronger day by day, as well from the pure mountain air as especially from the vigorous physical exertion, like the ascent of Schafberg, from which all my muscles still ache, and which she has already slept off better than I have. In order to reassure you somewhat, my dear mother, as to the expenses of the journey, I will tell you exactly to what they will mount up. We have now been fifteen days on the way—to-day being the 16th—and have spent 170 rthlr., or 30 fr'd'or; withal, sometimes had really very expensive places—Vienna, steamboat, Linz. I fancy now we shall stay away three to four weeks more, according to which the whole thing is likely to cost not much over 400 rthlr., and will give us a fund of pleasure for life. Johanna has just looked at this letter, and is dancing with amazement at my calling my mother "Thou."

\* I think he might call it simply "sleep."

What is there surprising in that? She calms herself through anticipation of her beloved plums, pears, peaches, on which her stomach tests itself successfully as really excellent every day. Grapes we have had, too, in abundance. If the weather continues to be as dull as it has been since yesterday, we shall travel without stop to Milan and Genoa, and see if it is better there, for in the mountains one does not see anything whatever at present. Now we want to ascend the Capuzinerberg. Please address letters to Meran in the Tyrol, where we shall leave directions for forwarding. Good-bye, dear parents. Your loyal son,

BISMARCK.

I am well and cheerful; live with Werdeck, 18 Leipziger Platz. Berlin is very quiet. Silesia, on the other hand, near complete break-up. Yesterday we had in the evening a preliminary conference of the whole Landtag. This body is in such terror, not of the Berliners, but of the whole European situation, that it unanimously wishes to avoid everything—even the merest trifle—that might oppose the present ministry, wishing to sustain and reinforce it by every possible means. An address was debated yesterday, from which we with difficulty excluded the praise of the barricade fighters, but as an offset dropped out our demonstration in behalf of the troops also. Good-bye and salutations. Your very faithful B.

BERLIN, April 2, '48.

MY DEAR,—I believe I can now reassure you most completely as to the safety of the members of the Landtag. The Landtag was opened to-day, *minus* King and *minus* cheers, with quite calm discussion. In a few words I uttered my protest against the thanks and exultation that

were voted to the King, without hostilities becoming overt. Ten thousand men of the city militia were posted for our protection, but not even a slight disturbance occurred at the palace. I could be with you to-morrow, as there is no session, if I had ordered a carriage to meet me at Genthin this evening. But as the whole affair apparently will come to an end this week, perhaps as early as Thursday, I was too stingy to hire a carriage. Brauchitsch was taken violently ill again last evening. . . . Give cordial remembrances to your mother, and be of good courage. I am much calmer than I was: with Vincke one heart and one soul.

Your faithful  
B.

April 2, '48, Sunday Evening.

I fear, my dear heart, the letter I wrote you last evening reached the post-office so late, through an oversight, that you will not receive it to-day, and not before to-morrow with this; and it pains me to think that you were disappointed in your hope when the mail was delivered, and now (9 o'clock in the evening) are perhaps troubled with disquietude of all sorts about me. I have spent a tiresome day, tramping the pavement, smoking and intriguing. Do not judge of the few words I spoke yesterday from the report in the *Berlin Times*. I shall manage to bring you a copy of the speech, which has no significance except as showing that I did not wish to be included in the category of certain venal bureaucrats who turned their coat with contemptible shamelessness to suit the wind. The impression it made was piteous, while even my most zealous opponents shook my hand with greater warmth after my declaration. I have just come from a great citizens' meeting, of perhaps a thousand people, in the Milenz Hall, where the Polish question was debated very decorously,

very good speeches were made, and on the whole the sentiment seemed to turn against the Poles, especially after a disconsolate Jew had arrived, straight from Samter, who told terrible stories about the lawless excesses of the Poles against the Germans: he himself had been soundly beaten. . . .

Just for my sake do not alarm yourself if each mail does not bring you a letter from me. There is not the slightest probability that a hair of our heads will be touched, and my friends of all kinds overrun me, to share their political wisdom with me, so that I began a letter of one-quarter sheet to Malle this morning at 9, and could not finish before 3. I am living in comfort and economy with Werdeck, only rather far away, in consequence of which I already feel the pavement through my soles. Cordial remembrances to the mother and the Bellins. I am writing on the *table d'hôte* table of the Hôtel des Princes, and a small salad has just been brought for my supper.

Your very faithful

B.

April 3, '48.

SCHÖNHAUSEN, August 21, '48.

8.30 P. M.

*To Herr von Puttkamer, at Reinfeld, near Zuckers,  
Pomerania.*

DEAR FATHER,—You have just become, with God's gracious help, the grandfather of a healthy, well-formed girl that Johanna has presented me with after hard but short pains. At the moment mother and child are doing as well as one could wish. Johanna lies still and tired, yet cheerful and composed, behind the curtain; the little creature, in the meantime, under coverlets on the sofa, and squalls off and on. I am quite glad that the first is a daughter, but if it had been a cat I should have thanked



God on my knees the moment Johanna was rid of it: it is really a desperately hard business. I came from Berlin last night, and this morning we had no premonition of what was to come. At ten in the morning Johanna was seized with severe pains after eating a grape, and the accompanying symptoms led me to put her at once to bed, and to send in haste to Tangermünde, whence, in spite of the Elbe, Dr. Fricke arrived soon after 12. At 8 my daughter was audible, with sonorous voice. This afternoon I sent Hildebrand off to fetch nurse Boldt from Berlin in a great hurry. I hope you will not postpone your journey now; but earnestly beg dear mother not to make the trip in an exhausting manner. I know, of course, that she has little regard for her own health, but just for Johanna's sake you must take care of yourself, dear mother, so that she may not be anxious on your account. Fricke pleases us very much—experienced and careful. I do not admit visits: Bellin's wife, the doctor, and I attend to everything. Fricke estimates the little one at about nine pounds in weight. Up to the present time, then, everything has gone according to rule, and for that praise and thanks be to the Lord. If you could bring Annchen with you that would make Johanna very happy.

22. *Morning*.—It is all going very well, only the cradle is still lacking, and the little miss must camp meanwhile on a forage-crib. May God have you and us in his keeping, dear parents. Until we meet again, presently. B.

Have the kindness to attend to the announcements, save in Berlin and Reddentin, in your neighborhood: Seehof, Satz, and so forth. Johanna sends cordial greetings. She laments her daughter's large nose. I think it no larger than it has a right to be.

THE LOVE LETTERS OF BISMARCK [SEPT.

SCHÖNHAUSEN, August 24, '48.

*To Frau von Puttkamer, née von Glasenap, Reinfeld, near Zuckers.*

DEAR MOTHER,—I am uncertain whether this letter will find you still in Reinfeld, and write at hap-hazard; but I want to convey the comforting assurance in it that Johanna's condition is still good. Only a cough that she contracted several days before the child's birth troubles her somewhat in her feebleness, especially this morning. The little creature bellows precisely as though it were going to be slaughtered, and in general has no misgivings about letting its voice resound mightily when it wakes up and does not find everything in order. In regard to nourishment, things are going badly still. The brat, with an obstinacy which she cannot inherit from me, positively refuses to take the breast, like a naughty hedgehog, save that she also makes her aversion very clearly understood. Till now Boldt has been sleeping in your room, and I still behind the curtain, so that, at least at the first, I may be near her, for she has most confidence in me, and I am the most thoughtful for her, too. So I alternate all day long, like Schiller's knight of St. John, between political battles and plans at my writing-desk and the nurse's apron at the sick-bed. I seem to myself to be very nice in the comparison. Mail time is at hand. A cordial good-bye, dear mother. Your faithful son, B.

BERLIN, Saturday, 11 P.M., September 23, '48.

*To Frau von Bismarck, Schönhausen, near Jerichow.*

MY PET!—To-day at last I have news of your condition, and am very grateful to mother for the letter. . . . I am beginning to be really homesick for you, my heart,

and mother's letter to-day threw me into a mood utterly sad and crippling: a husband's heart, and a father's—at any rate, mine in the present circumstances—does not fit in with the whirl of politics and intrigue. On Monday, probably, the die will be cast here. Either the ministry will be shown to be weak, like its predecessors, and sink out—and against this I shall still struggle—or it will do its duty, and then I do not for a moment doubt that blood will flow on Monday evening or on Tuesday. I should not have believed that the democrats would be confident enough to take up the gage of battle, but all their behavior indicates that they are bent on it. Poles, Frankfort men, loafers, volunteers—all sorts of riffraff are again at hand. They count on the defection of the troops, apparently misled by the talk of individual discontented gabblers among the soldiers; but I think they will make a great mistake. I personally have no occasion to await the thing here, and so to tempt God by asking him to protect me in perils that I have no call to seek. Accordingly, I shall betake my person to a place of safety not later than to-morrow. If nothing important occurs on Monday, on Tuesday I shall reach you; but if the trouble begins, I should still like to stay near the King. But there you may (in an aside I say “unfortunately”) assume with confidence that there will be no danger. You received no letter from me to-day, because I sent a report about the society to Gärtner, and you will learn from him that I am all right. You will receive this to-morrow, and I shall write again on Monday. Send horses for me on Tuesday. God bless and guard you, my sweetheart.

Your faithful

B.

Sunday, *November 4*, '48.

MY SWEETHEART, — I did not write you yesterday

because Hans had faithfully promised me to go from Potsdam to Schönhausen at ten o'clock. I hope he is with you. I was absent all day yesterday on State affairs; did not reach home till late at night, and am still in bed—especially as I have nothing to put on yet. Perhaps I shall find news from you in the Hôtel des Princes (I am still living with Goltz). I am very homesick and disturbed about you, my beloved; your image is ever before me, so pale and large-eyed that I fairly long to lay hold on you as substantial flesh and bone, and to reassure myself. I will come to-morrow without fail, too; send horses for me at noon, though I shall not come before evening, perhaps. Do not scold me; be not angry, my heart, for I could not leave before. My compliments to M. It is high time to close.

Your  
B.

Your

B.

(Postmark, BERLIN, *November 9, '48.*)

MY DEAREST,—Although I am confident that I shall be with you in person a few hours after this letter, I want to inform you immediately that everything is quiet till now. I go to Potsdam at nine, but must post the letter here now, as otherwise it will not reach you to-day. Our friends have been steadfast till now, but I cannot take courage yet to believe in anything energetic. I still fear, fear, and the weather is unfavorable, too. Above all, you must not be afraid of anything, if I should stay away to-day by any chance. The K. may send for me, or some one else in Potsdam earnestly wish that I should stay there to advise upon further measures, the trains may be delayed because the carriages are required for soldiers, and other things of the sort. Then, courage and patience, my heart, in any event. The God who makes worlds go round can also cover me with his wings. And in P. there is no danger

anyhow. So expect me in the evening; if I happen not to come, I shall be all right nevertheless. Cordial remembrances to our cross little mother.

Your most faithful

B.

POTSDAM, *November 10, '48.*

MY ANGEL,—Please, please do not scold me for not coming to-day either; I must try to put through some more matters in relation to the immediate future. At two this afternoon all Wrangel's troops will reach Berlin, disarm the flying corps, maybe, take the disaffected deputies from the *Concertsaal*, and make the city again a royal Prussian one. It is doubtful whether they will come to blows in the process. Contrary to our expectations, everything remained quiet yesterday; the democrats seem to be much discouraged. . . .

Your

V. B.

POTSDAM, *November 14, '48.*

MY DEAR PET,—Long sleep can certainly become a vice. Senfft has just waked me at nine o'clock, and I cannot yet get the sand out of my eyes. It is quiet here. Yesterday it was said to be the intention to serenade the Queen (on her birthday) with mock music; one company posted there sufficed to make the audacious people withdraw in silence. Berlin in a state of siege, but as yet not a shot fired. The disarming of the city militia goes on forcibly and very gradually. The meeting in the *Schützenhaus* was dispersed by soldiers yesterday; six men who were unwilling to go thrown out at the door. Martial law will be proclaimed over there to-day. My friend Schramm has been arrested. That Rob. Blum, Fröbel, Messenhauser,

have been shot in Vienna, you already know from the newspapers. Good-bye, you angel; I must close. Many remembrances to all. The peasants of the neighborhood have declared to the King that if he has need of them he should just call them: that they would come with weapons and supplies to aid his troops, from the Zauch-Belzig-Teltow, the Havelland, and other districts. Mention that in Schönhausen, please, so that it may go the rounds.

Your

v. B.

POTSDAM, Thursday Morning,

*November 16, '48.*

DEAR NANNE!—I did not get your very dear, nice letter of Tuesday morning until yesterday afternoon, but none the less did I right fervently rejoice and take comfort in it, because you are well, at least in your way, and are fond of me. There is no news from here except that Potsdam and Berlin are as quiet as under the former King, and the surrender of arms in B. continues without interruption, with searching of houses, etc. It is possible that there may be scenes of violence incidentally—the troops secretly long for them—but on the whole the “passive resistance” of the democrats seems to me only a seasonable expression for what is usually called fear. Yesterday I dined with the King. The Queen was amiable in the English fashion. The enclosed twig of erica I picked from her sewing-table, and send it to keep you from being jealous. . . .

If a letter from the Stettin bank has arrived, send it to me immediately, please, marked, “To be delivered promptly.” If I do not receive it before day after to-morrow, I shall return home, but must then go to Stettin at the beginning of next week. So let horses be sent for me on



Saturday afternoon; this evening I unfortunately cannot go to Genthin, because I expect Manteuffel here. . . .

The democrats are working all their schemes in order to represent the opinion of the "people" as hostile to the King; hundreds of feigned signatures. Please ask the town-counsellor whether there are not some sensible people in Magdeburg, who care more for their neck, with quiet and good order, than for this outcry of street politicians, and who will send the King a counter-address from Magdeburg. I must close. Give my best regards to mamma, and kiss the little one for me on the left eye. Day after to-morrow, then, if I do not get the Stettin letter sooner. Good-bye, my sweet angel.

Yours forever,

V. B.

Friday Evening, *November 17, '48.*

MY DARLING,—I have a real heart's need to be with you, and I wander around impatiently, not because I fear lest you should grieve and fret and be angry with me for remaining away, but it is my own egotism: the restless, vagabond life, the solitariness in all this trouble, oppresses me beyond measure, and I just long to sit with you by the domestic fireside. In spite of that, however, I shall perhaps not be able to travel to-morrow. Politically, all goes according to my wish as yet, and I am very thankful to God that he has deemed me worthy of rendering important services to the good cause on several occasions, and again to-day. At the moment I am still in Berlin, at Savigny's, but in half an hour I go to Potsdam, whence I shall forward this letter to-morrow. Here it is entirely quiet; the aspect of the streets has again become much more pleasing, and the troops are disarming without interruption.



*Potsdam.*—What with writing and speaking, one o'clock has come around again, and I would rather finish this to-day and sleep late to-morrow. My sincere thanks for both your letters, which have given me great pleasure in my uncomfortable homesickness. But do not ruin your eyes utterly, my sweet angel, so that the little stars may be quite wide and dark when I come. But to-morrow I cannot, my dear, as I have another conference here Sunday morning. I hope I can then settle the money matter in Berlin, and need not go to Stettin. . . .

A cordial good-bye. I kiss your hands, my sweet, and will go to sleep. Finkenstein is snoring near me like a tiger. Good-night. God protect you, with mother and daughter. Your most faithful v. B.

BRANDENBURG, Friday,  
*February 2, '49.*

MY DEAR!—Again I am sitting at Franziska's little table, and the sun is shining straight into my face so that I can scarcely see. A very nice preacher is here whom Barschall\* brought with him from Genthin. He lives not far from Briest—a strong, devout nature, reminding me of Wagner somewhat. . . .

My angel, is it well with you? Do you not write at all? Are there no letters for me? Last night I felt somehow very anxious on your account as I lay in bed, and I was really homesick; besought the dear God very earnestly that He would be pleased to guard you. I hope He has done so, although I do not deserve it at His hands. You received my letter yesterday, of course. I took it myself to

\*Governor of the prison in Brandenburg, and husband of Franziska von Puttkamer-Versin.

the station, and was assured that it would leave at nine. Now I will take this there, too; it is half past nine, and the train goes in an hour. My love to mother and daughter.

Your faithful

V. B.

BRANDENBURG, *February 5, '49.*

BELOVED HEART,—Many thanks for your letter, which I received yesterday in the midst of the exhalation and noise of four hundred people, to whom I had, with God's help, just delivered a speech which was received with stormy approval. Barschall brought it, and I read it under a stinking lamp. "When a sweet, familiar tone drew me from the awful turmoil:" thus was I for a moment withdrawn from the disorderly proceedings, and with you in a cosy little room, with the child and mother, with water boiling for tea and nice eggs. It will be a hard thing, if I should be elected—this life without rest in the heart. . . .

You will, then, see me, not until to-morrow noon, either elected, and with a headache, or not elected, and then presumably without one. Yesterday, already rejoicing over the result, at least fifty healths were drunk—mine also, of course; there were over two hundred guests—peasants, townspeople, and "of nobility," as Luther used to say. They sang, "Hail to Thee!" and "I am a Prussian." How will it be to-day, if they should elect me? Democrats and republicans listened to my speech together, and even the worst of them kept so scrupulously quiet that one could hear a pin drop, and some of them came up afterwards to shake hands with me. All refrained very decorously from vulgar demonstrations. Cordial remembrances to mother, and may God protect you and your little one. I must close to take this to the station.

Your most faithful and dearest

V. B.

THE LOVE LETTERS OF BISMARCK [MAR.

Friday Evening.

(Postmark, BERLIN, *March 3, '49.*)

I have just received your letter of yesterday, my angel, and I am very sorry that you have again had so much trouble with the dear little one. If you are anywise distressed about the conduct of the nurse, I advise you again to dismiss her instantly and take another. I cannot believe that such a change can do so much harm as her mental agitation and other possible bad qualities. If the child should begin to lose in health with her, that must certainly be done. . . .

We have no apartment yet, but an agent is looking for one, and we shall find it easily. . . . I regard it as positively settled and as natural that you are to come, only we will wait for the outcome of the debate on our reply to the speech from the throne; that must ensue next week, and then there will be something of a break, whether the matter is to last long or not. I must write still other letters to-night, and so take leave of you. I have just reread the 138th Psalm, and last evening the 64th, which is similar. I haven't Isaiah! I pray God very fervently that He may defend and sustain you, my sweetheart, and give you peace and confidence in His strong and loving hand. Give my love to M. and baby, and farewell, my beloved.                      Your very faithful                      v. B.

Take good care of your eyes, too. Don't you notice the least effect from Bücking's belladonna? Write him more precisely about your condition, and I will look after the letter. How about your throat? I cannot count my wash now—I have to bend over too much. It lies like cabbage and beets in my portmanteau. Excuse me; perhaps I shall do it Sunday. The little doctor may still get his appointment, perhaps, but it is not certain.

BERLIN, Sunday. (Postmark, *March 18, '49.*)

MY LOVE,—It is very solitary here in my little room when one has to drink his coffee all alone, and your little bed is once more so littered with clothing and papers that it is in extreme disorder. Immediately after your departure I received a few dear lines from mother, according to which all was going well in Schönhausen. With God's assistance, nothing will have been changed in that situation. Since then I have had two very tiresome division meetings, and a big dinner yesterday of four hundred persons, in which all the veterans of 1813, the Berlin militia officers, and those officers who are in the Chambers took part. One had to drink a great deal of wine, sing, shout "Hurrah," and my head is rather confused to-day. I slept beyond church time, too, and have no desire whatever to dress to attend a tiresome conference on regulating parishes. Please send back Malle's foot-pouch soon, when you have opportunity, or by mail; she might need it. She has an agreement with Arnim now for three games of whist in the afternoon; but she is expected sometimes to play six, and then she is in a very bad humor. I could wish her both to manage and to take it differently. To-day I am to dine with Beps in the barracks, a thing I do unwillingly: there again one is forced to drink wine, one day like all the rest. There seems to be no thought of celebrating the 18th of March here; the town has an everyday appearance. It may be that in other places, Cologne, and so forth, there is something going on—here there are too many troops for that. To-morrow the debates on the address begin, and from their course one will be able to judge of that of the Chamber as a whole, and by the end of the week we may, therefore, decide about our lodgings. . . .

Your very faithful                      v. B.

THE LOVE LETTERS OF BISMARCK [MAR.

BERLIN, Thursday.

(Postmark, *March 29, '49.*)

DEAR NANNE,—I received your little letter, thank God, apparently forwarded by the Gärtners, and drew fresh hope from it that God will protect our little one from suffering. We have at last taken an apartment. . . . The Arnims have an entrance from the stairway; we are, therefore, quite separate, and have our own home to ourselves. . . . The arrangement seems to me to meet all your wishes, and yet it is the dreaded Antonin quarter, Wilhelmstrasse, corner of Behrenstrasse. I fancy your dislike of it was due merely to the division proposed by Malle; the present arrangement is my work, which I have worked out with difficulty. You are satisfied with it, are you not? It costs fifty-eight rix-dollars per month (seven hundred yearly), to which must be added the furniture, which I estimate at fifteen to eighteen, altogether about one-third of the salary. I do not think it too dear. It can be occupied Monday, and the Arnims move in immediately. We shall probably have a week's Easter vacation from next Wednesday. This week we may spend either here or in Schönhausen, according to your choice: to me it seems, out of consideration for the child, almost better in Schönhausen. What does mammy say about it? In any event, we will and must spend the holiday with her: that will please God better. We have passed through our time of trouble together, and we will also thank God together on the day of the resurrection that He has brought us so far on our way. Church privileges, however, are better here. I leave it entirely to your will and God's; the health of our child is to have its say, too. . . .

Forgive me, my love, that I have not written you for three days. In the few hours that we had free I was so

beset with callers—friends from Mecklenburg, Silesia, and from the Rhine—and so tired was I that I went to sleep in the meetings. In Genthin, on Monday morning, Unruh met me, and his first question was about the child. He is very sympathetic. I hope I told him the truth in saying that the danger was past. May God not punish me in this way for my sins, and not make you pay for my abundant demerits. Let us commend ourselves to His mercy. Many salutations to M. A cordial good-bye, and send me news of baby; do not be angry, either, about the apartment, if it does not please you. The others were all unsuitable, or were already taken.

Your very faithful, v. B.

I have found the ribbon for mother. My sweetheart, you, do come on Sunday, or, if you are not coming, write so I may come.

BERLIN, *July* 16, '49.

*To Frau von Bismarck, Reinfeld:*

MY DEAREST NANNE,—I arrived here safely, and have in some degree slept off my fatigue. We have been parted but forty-two hours, and it seems to me that a week has passed since I saw you standing among the pines on the hill and waving a farewell; then I looked towards the blue hills of Viartlum on the left, and our silent cousin considerably turned his head to the right, so as not to see that some salt-water ran down into my beard. It was, I believe, the first time since the school vacations that a leave-taking cost me tears, and in those days they meant the end of freedom and the return to school servitude quite as much as the separation from loved ones. This retrospect, in view of the melancholy fields of Neu-Kolziglow, made



me thank God ardently that I again have something from which it is hard to part, and I besought Him that He would be pleased to bless our marriage still further with true love. It was very disagreeable in Schlawe: many strange people in the room and no light, bad beer, and smoky soup. My companion as far as Cöslin was a very talkative Herr von Löper, brother of the Lietzow Eisenhart, and later, as far as Stettin, Schwerin, our revolutionary Minister of Education, who slept until we reached Naugard, and then all the way to Stettin argued very zealously with me. He is a good, honorable man, but a dyed-in-the-wool constitutionalist. In Naugard I saw Bernhard at the post-office. From Stettin to this place I travelled with two German-Polish ladies, mother and daughter, who told me much about the excesses of the Poles in Wreschen, and the continued reign of terror under which the Germans there are living: they dare not even demand that what is left of the property stolen from them during the outbreak be returned by the notorious robbers and thieves, who strut about in it before their eyes, and Wreschen townswomen are wearing shawls worth sixty and eighty rix-dollars in the presence of the German owners from whom they were taken. My gallantry served me a bad turn once more. The ladies had never been in Berlin, had not, of course, ordered a carriage to meet them, and I had to take them with me in mine, the only remaining one, as far as Meinhard's.\* They overlooked the fact that I had paid their luggage-porter, and when we drew up in front of Meinhard's the mother protested very energetically against my having paid for the carriage alone, misunderstood my response that the driver had not yet

\* Meinhardt's Hotel.



been paid at all, and vanished into the hotel with most gracious regrets that I had been put to trouble and expense on their account, so that I finally, half amused and half vexed at the *naïveté* of the provincials, found myself compelled to pay the driver double for the fair sex and its incredible mass of bundles. For *in summa* ten groschen I went to bed with the reassuring consciousness that I had behaved like a polite nobleman.

I went to Arnim's yesterday, late as it was, a little before ten o'clock. Malle was very well, according to Sade-wasser's report; Arnim had already been asleep for an hour. I waked him, as he was going to Angermünde this morning; but, in spite of manifold expectorations, could not get him to understand clearly that I no longer lived in the apartment, so drunk with sleep was he. He had passed the previous night, as well as I could gather from his fragmentary, half-dreaming words, with several land-stewards; asked, with a glazed look, "Where were you yesterday, and how is Johanna doing?" and went off gently to sleep again on my hands. . . .

God defend you all, and the little one, too. Do not wear your dress too tight, and take care of your eyes, my pet. Good-bye. Your most faithful V. BISMARCK.

SCHÖNHAUSEN, *July 18, '49.*

MY PET,— . . . I wanted to write you in the evening, but the air was so heavenly that I sat for two hours or so on the bench in front of the garden-house, smoked and looked at the bats flying, just as with you two years ago, my darling, before we started on our trip. The trees stood so still and high near me, the air fragrant with linden blossoms; in the garden a quail whistled and partridges

allured, and over beyond Arneburg lay the last pink border of the sunset. I was truly filled with gratitude to God, and there arose before my soul the quiet happiness of a family life filled with love, a peaceful haven, into which a gust of wind perchance forces its way from the storms of the world-ocean and ruffles the surface, but its warm depths remain clear and still so long as the cross of the Lord is reflected in them. Though the reflected image be often faint and distorted, God knows his sign still. Do you give thanks to Him, too, my angel; think of the many blessings He has conferred upon us, and the many dangers against which He has protected us, and, with firm reliance on His strong hand, confront the evil spirits with that when they try to affright your sick fancy with all sorts of images of fear. . . .

Your most faithful

V. B.

BRANDENBURG, *July 23, '49.*

MY BELOVED NANNE!—I have just received your short letter of Friday, which reassures me somewhat, as I infer from it that our little one has not the croup, but the whooping-cough, which is, indeed, bad, but not so dangerous as the other. You, poor dear, must have worried yourself sick. It is very fortunate that you have such good assistance from our people and the preacher, yet are you all somewhat lacking in confidence, and increase each other's anxiety instead of comforting one another. Barschall has just told me that all of his children have had this croupy cough—that it was endemic in Posen in his time; his own and other children were attacked by it repeatedly in the course of a few days; that every family had an emetic of a certain kind on hand in

the house, and by that means overcame the enemy easily every time, and without permanent consequences for the child. Be comforted, then, and trust in the Lord God; He does, indeed, show us the rod that He has ready for us, but I have the firm belief that He will put it back behind the mirror. As a child I, too, suffered from whooping-cough to the extent of inflammation of the lungs, and yet entirely outgrew it. I have the greatest longing to be with you, my angel, and think day and night about you and your distress, and about the little creature, during all the wild turmoil of the elections. . . .

Here in Brandenburg the party of the centre is decidedly stronger than ours; in the country districts I hope it is the other way, yet the fact cannot be overlooked. It is incredible what cock-and-bull stories the democrats tell the peasants about me; in fact, one from the Schönhausen district, three miles from us, confided to me yesterday that, when my name is mentioned among them, a regular shudder goes through them from head to foot, as though they should get a couple of "old-Prussian broadsword strokes" laid across their shoulders. As an opponent said recently, at a meeting, "Do you mean to elect Bismarck Schönhausen, the man 'who, in the countryman's evening prayer, stands hard by the devil'?" (From Grillparzer's "Ahnfrau.") And yet I am the most soft-hearted person in the world towards the common people. On the whole, my election here in these circumstances seems very doubtful to me; and as I do not believe I shall be elected in the other place either, when I am not there personally, we may live together quietly the rest of the summer, if it be God's will, and I will pet you into recovery from your fright about the child, my darling. Have no anxiety whatever about my personal safety; one hears nothing

of the cholera here except in a letter from Reinfeld. The first rule to observe, if it should come nearer to you, is to speak of it as little as possible; by speaking, one always augments the fear of others, and fear of it is the easiest bridge on which it can enter the human body. . . .

God guard you and your child, and all our house.

Your most faithful V. B.

It is better not to leave the doors all open constantly, for the child often gets shock from the draught, when one is opened, before you can prevent it.

BERLIN, *August 8, '49.*

MY PRETTY DARLING,—I arrived here day before yesterday evening, rather tired—from Schlawe to Stettin in an extra coach again, changing, therefore, at each station, but less uncomfortable. The conductor was my only company as far as Naugard, and happily was silent. . . .

Hans lives here in the hotel, too. I am still undecided whether I shall live with him in a *chambre garnie*. He is somewhat too tyrannical for me, with my habits; wakes me every morning before I want to get up, and orders my coffee so that it gets cold; then suddenly pulls Gossner's little jewel-box out of his pocket, and grants me as a privilege a morning devotion with a hymn, which he reads aloud. That is all very fine, but for me often untimely. Nothing must be said to him about it, however, or he will get skittish again; he is much more affectionate at present. I went to see Malle yesterday; you will have received her letter meanwhile. The wet-nurse's sister wished to have the news of the child's death kept from her, as otherwise her milk might fail. I am only afraid she will some-

how learn of it, nevertheless, and then will be still more shocked. Follow your own judgment in the matter. I cannot pass upon it at this distance. If it affects her very much, you must send her away. For the rest, the child had every assistance and care, and its father had accepted it with much love. . . .

Your very faithful

v. B.

(Postmark, BERLIN, *August 8, '49.*)

MY LOVE,—I sent you a letter this morning, and have just received yours, in reply to which I will add a few more words touching the wet-nurse. If any one besides you and father and mother already knows about the matter, in the house or outside, then tell her the truth unhesitatingly, for in that case it will not stay hidden. If the matter is still known to yourselves alone, let it continue so, but then keep watch on the mail-bag, lest she learn of it unexpectedly. The wet-nurse's sister here is unwilling to have it told to her. I shall look her up to-day and speak with her. But if you do not wish to keep it secret any longer, when once the child is rid of her cough, you should at any rate look about you for a wet-nurse or woman who, in case of necessity, can take Friederike's place immediately, if the effect is such that the child cannot stay with her. I shall get the sister to give me a letter to her, in which the story will be told exactly and soothingly; this I shall send to you, so that you may make use of it in case of need; that, I think, is the best way she can learn of it. To tell her first that her child is sick, and so forth, I do not consider a good plan, for anxiety has a worse effect than the truth. God will graciously bring us out of this trouble. He holds us with a short

THE LOVE LETTERS OF BISMARCK [Aug.

rein lest we should become self-confident, but He will not let us fall. Good-bye, my best-of-all; pray and keep your head up. Your very faithful v. B.

BERLIN, *August 11, '49.*

MON ANGE,—I went to see the wet-nurse's kinsfolk, and there learned that the *fiancé* had written to her last Wednesday and revealed all to her; so the matter will go as God directs. If you chanced to intercept the letter, and on receipt of this have not yet delivered it, please delay it until my next arrives. I could not find the *fiancé* himself, and directed him to come to me this evening, and shall write you what I learn from him. If Friederike knows everything already, my wishes will reach you too late; otherwise I should like, if in accordance with medical opinion, not to have the wet-nurse sent away altogether, but only relieved from service for a few hours or days; if, however, there are scruples on that point, it can't be done, of course. From my many doubts, you will see that I cannot decide the matter very well at this distance. Act quite in accordance with the advice of your mother and the other experienced friends. I give my views, merely, not commands. . . . Be content with these lines for to-day; be courageous and submissive to God's will, my darling; all will surely go well. Cordial remembrances to the parents. Your most faithful v. B.

BERLIN, Friday.

(Postmark, *August 17, '49.*)

DEAREST NANNE,— . . . Your last letter, in which you inform me of the happy solution of the wet-nurse difficulty, took a real load off my heart; I thanked God for His mercy, and could almost have got drunk from pure gayety. May



His protection extend henceforward, too, over you and the little darling. I am living with Hans here at the corner of Taubenstrasse, three rooms and one alcove, quite elegant, but narrow little holes; Hans's bed full of bugs, but mine not as yet—I seem not to be to their taste. We pay twenty-five rix-dollars a month, together. If there were one additional small room, and not two flights of stairs, I could live with you here, and Hans could get another apartment below in this house. But as it is, it would be too cramped for us. I have talked with the *fiancé* of the wet-nurse, a modest-looking person. He spoke of her with love, and declared in reply to my question that he certainly is willing to marry her. What he wrote about the “white pestilence” is nonsense; no such sickness exists, least of all in Berlin. The cholera is fast disappearing. I have not heard a word more about it since I came here; one sees it only in newspaper reports. Isn't our mammy jealous because, according to the paper, I have been in company with “strikingly handsome” Englishwomen? Lady Jersey was really something uncommon, such as is usually seen only in *keepsakes*. I would have paid a rix-dollar admission if she had been exhibited for money. She is now in Vienna. For the rest, I have not had a letter from you this long time; my last news comes from Bernhard, who left you a week ago to-day. God has upheld you meantime, I trust, my angel. It is possible that a letter from you is here. The delivery is always rather irregular: sometimes the letter-carrier brings them, sometimes they are delivered at the Chamber postal station. I will go immediately and inquire if anything is there; then I will take a bath, and return at least ten calls that have been paid me. It is a misery that now the people always receive one—one loses a terrible amount of time at it. . . . Hans is



still inclined to treat me tyrannically, but I resist, and have been so far successful that I sleep as long as I please, whereat the coffee grows cold, however, as he is obstinately bent on not breakfasting alone. So, too, he will not go to bed if I do not go at the same time, but sleeps, just like my little Nanne, on the sofa. . . . Now, good-bye, my much-beloved heart. I am very anxious on your account, and often am quite tearful about it. Best regards to the parents.

Your most faithful

v. B.

BERLIN, Wednesday,  
(Postmark, *August 22, '49.*)

MY DEAREST NANNE,—As I wrote you last Friday, at the very moment of posting my letter I came upon your nice one, which was a real pleasure and a tonic to me, because everything was going so well with you, and you are so fond of me, my angel. I fear, however, that my thanks to God for it were not exactly in His spirit, for I went off and drank a great deal of champagne in my delight. . . . Hans went out long ago, and I, just out of bed, am sitting on a red plush sofa and drinking in solitude the tea I made myself, for which Malle, the angel, has given me half a pound, and the hostess polished up her brass Sunday kettle. The people are tailors, just recently married, and very obliging. With Hans I lead a peaceable married life, and I flatter myself that he is becoming more amiable and human in consequence. He sings and whistles at times, and whinnies as he used to do, but still he is old far beyond his years. . . .

Yesterday I went to the industrial exposition with Malle; there I should have liked to be a millionaire in order to buy you a lot of pretty things—writing-tables for six hundred rix-dollars, and the like. . . .

In the morning I sometimes ride out with Oscar, and in the afternoons we take the customary drive in the little green carriage, with Malle and cigars, along the old Thiergarten roads, every stone and every hole in which the horses know by this time. The Hungarian affair is now probably over—it is believed here that Görgey was bribed, but it is rather to be assumed that he himself perceives the uselessness of prolonging a struggle which will only cost more blood and money, without offering to the Hungarians any prospect of advantage. Our Frankfort people are very much staggered by the affair, which will perhaps give a different trend soon to the entire German policy. . . . Hans sends best regards, and urges me to dress and go out. He sticks close to my side, and I must now end, while in spirit I embrace you, my most deeply beloved Nanne.

Your most faithful

v. B.

BERLIN, Thursday,  
(Postmark, *August 23, '49.*)

MY DARLING,—Again, just when I took my letter to the post-office, I found both of your nice ones there. I must countermand this receiving of letters through the branch office in the Chamber; it is too irregular. I suffered this morning from the shady side of living with another man: Hans is intolerable with his many visitors. . . . I have finally emancipated myself, and am writing to you in my little bedroom only a few words to thank you for your dear, very dear letters. How can you possibly believe that there could be too many of them for me? I am always cheerful and content for a whole day when I have read in your handwriting that you all are thriving and God has His hand over you. The conditions in our apartment

are not so bad as you think : the bugs have not yet troubled me. Hans seems to taste better to them. . . .

Hösel wants to be cordially remembered to all of you; Hans also, of course, and the latter commissions me to tell you, in regard to the Hagens, in Langen, that they will go to Berlin at the end of September, and are prepared and have room to take you and child with them, if you will come to Langen at that time. You might correspond with them about it. I still think, indeed, I shall be able to fetch you myself; but there is always some uncertainty what the situation will be in the Chamber just at that time. We have before now suffered severe defeats at the hands of the Frankforters in the division-elections, through the absence of individuals of our party, and it might suit me better, in some circumstances, to fetch you from Stettin than from Reinfeld. All that, however, is said provisionally, and if there is anything unpleasing to you in the plan about the Hagens, I shall contrive, I fancy, to come myself. But write to them, nevertheless, if just for the sake of politeness. Don't forget, either, to have the Brabant coach made water-proof. Again a new caller is with Hans in the next room. . . .

Once again a thousand thanks for your dear diligence in writing, and the same number of salutations for the parents and Annchen.

Your most faithful

v. B.

BERLIN, Monday.  
(Postmark, *August 28, '49.*)

MY DARLING,—I sit here in my corner room, two flights up, and survey the sky, full of nothing but little sunset-tinted lambs, as it appears, along the Taubenstrasse and over the tree-tops of Prinz Carl's garden, while along



PRINCESS BISMARCK

1871



Friedrichstrasse it is all golden and cloudless; the air damp and mild, too. I thought of you and of Venice, and this only I wanted to write to you. News has come to-day that Venice has surrendered at discretion; so we can go there again, and again see the tall white grenadiers. . . . I dined with Manteuffel to-day, yesterday with Prince Albert, of course, day before yesterday with Arnim, and then I took a ride with him of fourteen miles at a gallop—which suited me well, save for some muscular pains. In the Chamber we keep on doing nothing whatever; in the Upper House the German question, happily, has been brought forward again in very good speeches by Gerlach, Bethmann, and Stahl, and yet to-day the Camphausen proposition was adopted with all the votes against nineteen. With us, too, it is beginning to excite men's tempers. The proposition is bad in its tendency, but its result insignificant, even if it goes through with us, as is to be expected. *Tant de bruit pour une omelette*. The real decision will not be reached in our Chambers, but in diplomacy and on the battle-field, and all that we prate and resolve about it has no more value than the moonshine observations of a sentimental youth who builds air-castles and thinks that some unexpected event will make him a great man. *Je m'en moque?*—and the farce often bores me nearly to death, because I see no sensible object in this straw-threshing. Mother's little letter gave me great pleasure, because, in the first place, I see that you are well, and then because she has her old joke with me, which is much pleasanter at a distance, as it does not lead to strife; and yet how I should like to quarrel with mammy once more! I am genuinely homesick to be quietly with you all in Schönhausen. Have you received the ribbon for Annchen?

*Tuesday.*— . . . Hans is just breakfasting, and eating up, from sheer stinginess, a quarter pound of butter that he bought three days ago, because it begins to get old. Now he screams that my tea is there, too. I close for to-day, as I have something to do afterwards. My love to FatherMotherAnnaAdelheidMarie and all the rest. God's blessing be with you and keep you well and merry.

Your most faithful

v. B.

BERLIN, Friday.

(Postmark, *August 31, '49.*)

MY DARLING,—I have many letters to write to-day, it is true, but you shall have the first of them, were it only to set your mind at rest about my being able to be angry with you! How can you even for a moment think seriously, my heart, that I might have taken amiss your solicitude? On the contrary, it is but a proof how dear I am to you.

I shall very willingly take the gardener, but that cannot be done before Easter, as Kahle cannot be notified sooner. I will write to Bellin, however, whether he has not by chance already given him notice, and I, perhaps, have simply forgotten it. You write recently about several letters from mother: up to the present time I have only one from her, the very little one last week, for which I was very thankful, however. Yours to Bücking and to Malle I have delivered; the latter wished to write to you to-day. She is now alone, as Oscar is giving possession of Mittenwalde, which, thank God, he has leased advantageously. I received your dear long letter day before yesterday at bedtime, after that rascal Hans had been with me the whole afternoon and evening at Finkenstein's and in the conservatives' beer-house without saying a word to me



about letters having come. I was very anxious for news; read it in bed, and fell asleep greatly relieved. . . .

My matrimony with Hans is still getting along very well. He is now quite tolerant, acknowledges that we are living together, not in a confederate state, but in a confederacy of states, and lets me sleep till ten o'clock in certain circumstances. Our host and hostess in adjoining rooms have four children, the oldest five years, and the smallest cries at night just as much as our pet, next to my bedroom; and when I wake up at night I often fancy, drunk with sleep, that I hear my daughter and am with you, my angel. It is a right good thing for me not to lose the habit. . . .

A thousand thanks, my love, for the purse, and to Annchen, too, for her help; I am saving the nice red one now, which will get dirty otherwise. Most cordial remembrances to our parents. God take you all under His gracious protection as heretofore. Your most faithful V. B.

BERLIN, Monday.

(Postmark, *September 3, '49.*)

MY LOVE,—I have just received your letter with much pleasure, and have read it in a very tiresome committee-meeting, held to consider the punishment of people who want to corrupt the soldiers. The hair-splitting lawyers and the vain, flowery speakers so enlarge upon the simple question that I can't prevent my thoughts from wandering, but give them a free course to you, my angel, whither your dear little letter points the way. In the first place, I am very thankful and glad that you are all well; but do not let melancholy dash down on your little head. It is hard for both of us that we have been constantly separated since that hateful March, but remember, too, that

it cannot always be so here under the changeful moon, and especially do not let fear of next December master you. All of us thousand million human beings were born of woman, you know, and to every living soul clings a mother's pain and danger; and how rare are misfortunes in that connection. Every time they do occur some neglect may be pointed out—some folly, or a natural defect, which you have not; and we will take care of you, be sure. That you stay in Reinfeld altogether is out of the question. I must set myself resolutely against any such unwifely proposal. If possible, I shall look for a *chambre garnie* that is let by the month, as it seems to me as yet more fitting and comfortable for you to meet your trial at Schönhausen. I shall, therefore, take leave of absence as long as till your bad days are over, and shall stay all that time at Schönhausen. . . .

From now on I shall number my letters, and begin this with 1. Do the same, too; then we shall know if one is lost. Forgive this disconnected letter; I have to be always quarrelling with the lawyers between times, and listening with half an ear to what they say. I regret very much that Annchen is leaving you. She is such a needful corrective for your disposition, and you will fall melancholy much oftener when she is gone. Mammy scolds me in her letter to Hans for not writing often enough. That is no fair reproach; I am very nice about writing, at least twice, often three times in a week, and now I still have time; but when the meetings get to be more frequent I am afraid, my darling, that my letters will become, not indeed less frequent, but shorter. It is disagreeable when one has callers the first thing in the morning, and Hans is a great magnet for them—mostly petitioners, often ladies, who sit for hours in front of my clothes-press, so

that I cannot get my socks. I am often dragged in, too. Then, if I only get out-of-doors, it is hard for me to come back to the neighborhood of the Taubenstrasse, as the attraction of luncheon directs my steps to other quarters. Then I come home at 11 or 12; want to write to my Nanne; then Hans sits there and we barter our day's experiences, read the *Kreuzzeitung*, and go to sleep with the firm resolve to write next morning, when, very often, another tiresome colleague is on hand, before I have had my sleep out. But do not allow yourself to be deterred by my possible laziness, or by bad-tempered scoffers, from writing to me as often and as fully as ever you like. I am always so much pleased by every report, and still more delighted if the letter is rather thick. . . .

Your most faithful

v. B.

(Postmark, BERLIN, *September 8, '49.*)

MY PET,—I wrote you two words this morning, and have just time to add two more this evening. You will see in the newspaper what sort of an experience I had this morning, as I wrote you, with the palaverer Beckerath. But I had my morning of limitation and dulness, on account of a cold and severe stoppage in the head. I forgot, therefore, the best of what I wanted to reply to him. It is probably in to-day's *Zuschauer*. I have not read it yet. About the fatted calf of the prodigal son, and the story of Beckerath and the Stein proposition—it was incredible how I could forget that, beyond measure stupid and irretrievable. But I was like a blockhead. God would not have it so. Opportunity, if not seized by the forelock once for all, does not come again. . . . Farewell, my beloved. If I only had quarters for you first, I have a great longing to complain to you of human folly.

Hans sits by me, and is working over his speech for newspaper articles. God with you, my heart.

Your v. B.

BERLIN, Sunday.

(Postmarked September 10, '49.)

DEAREST NANNIE,—I have just found your charming letter, much to my delight, for already the time was beginning to hang heavily on my hands, and I was getting jealous of Hans, who meanwhile had a letter from mother in which she is again hard on me; but that is no matter—she will come back to Schönhausen, anyway. I am physically well, and probably God will not allow my spirits to fail. Day before yesterday I wrote you two letters, Nos. 2 and 3; since then I have nothing new to tell you, only the old news that I love you very much, and that, therefore, I cannot let you remain at Reinfeld, much as it grieves me for your dear parents' sake. *Le vin est tiré, il faut le boire*—he who gives another man his daughter in marriage must accustom himself, withal, to the fact that she is married; to have your confinement at Reinfeld would be a semi-divorce; I neither can, nor will, be so long without my Nan; we are separated often enough as it is. About the end of this month I shall take you away either from Reinfeld or from Zimmerhausen, that is certain, if God wills. . . . Early this morning Malle and I heard Büchsel; he preached about the ten lepers, of whom only one showed gratitude. Very pretty, if he would only prepare himself somewhat; he always talks out of his sleeve; but his sermon made me deeply realize once more how ungrateful we are towards God. However, I am never satisfied with the singing of the Protestant congregations; I like much better to pray silently, while *good* church music is played by people who are proficient in it, and, withal, I

prefer a church whose interior is like that of the Tein church, and Morlach masses, with white-robed priests, smoke of tapers and incense; that is more solemn, is it not, *angela*? There Büchsel had a boy choir, who sang without the organ, a hymn inserted in the service; somewhat out of tune, and in truly democratic Berlin dialect; this innovation also disturbed me. . . . Only let me thank you once again most heartily for your very dear letter, and do write soon, my darling; it is always for me the "sweet familiar note in the terrible confusion" whenever I read anything from you, and then, to Hans's terror, I have an inclination to get out of politics, resign my mandate, and live quietly with you at Schönhausen; for it is all very much like my good old father at Kniephof, getting men and hounds to search the little bushes, and on every such occasion waiting with earnest and anxious watchfulness for the fox to appear, though he surely knew quite as well as I that there was no fox there. . . . God protect you, my angel.

Your most faithful

V. B.

BERLIN, *September 11, '49.*

(Postmarked September 10.)

I wrote yesterday, my Nannie, but as it costs me nothing, not even for paper, for this is the Chamber's, I do want to improve a wearisome moment, during which I must listen to the reading of a confused report on normal prices, to send you another little greeting; but again without the ribbon, for I am going to buy that later on. This morning I attended the cavalry manœuvres, on a very pleasant horse of Fritz's; rode sharply, swallowed much dust, but, nevertheless, had a good time; it is really pretty, these brilliant, rapidly moving masses, interspersed with the clanking of iron and the bugle signals. The Queen, my old flame,

greeted me so cordially. Having driven past without noticing me, she rose and turned backward over the bar of the carriage, to nod to me thrice; that lady appreciates a Prussian heart. To-morrow I shall take a look at the grand parade, in which the infantry also participates. I believe I have written you that the King and Leopold Gerlach visited the Emperor of Austria at Teplitz, where there was also a Russian plenipotentiary. The proletariats of the Chamber are now gradually coming to see that on that occasion something may have been concocted which will cast mildew on their German hot-house flowers, and the fact that his Majesty has conversed with the ruler of all the Croatians frightens them somewhat. *Qui vivra verra.* These Frankfort cabbage-heads are incorrigible; they and their phrases are like the old liars who in the end honestly believe their own stories; and the impression produced on our Chamber by such ridiculous things as they say, without any regard for the matter in hand, or for common-sense, will be sure at last to convince people generally that peasants and provincials are not fit to make laws and conduct European politics. Now I must listen. Farewell, my much-beloved heart. Love to my daughter and your parents.

Your most faithful

v. B.

BERLIN, Wednesday.

(Postmarked September 12, '49.)

. . . Yesterday I was much pleased to receive mummy's little letter; it is gratifying to me to know that many hearts outside of the Chamber are in accord with me, particularly that of my beloved; in the Chamber I am like the owl among the crows. . . . Just now, as I was writing this and not paying attention, I voted on the wrong side, very stupidly,



because I let myself be guided by my neighbor, Dewitz-Wussoff, who is usually right, instead of sticking to the much safer plan of always voting in opposition to Auerswald. I will close, so as not to let it happen again. Farewell, my beloved heart. Don't forget that you must leave in about two weeks, and keep well for my sake, my angel. . . . Farewell, my darling. Hearty love to the old folks.

Your most faithful                      v. B.

(Postmarked BERLIN, *September 14, '49.*)

Just now, my Nannie, Friday noon, in the usual tiresome Auerswald Committee, I received yours of Monday, and your letter and your love truly strengthen my heart in this ocean of boredom. What Hans told Adelaide about cholera symptoms was simply a lie to make himself interesting; he is even suffering from the reverse malady, the gray little wight, and I feel like a fish in water, but not like a trout in the Kamenz,\* rather like a carp in its mouldy hole, bored and dull in spirit. I must have you here, my angel. What are we married for? And the middle of October is quite out of the question, even if you are not ill; by that time, too, it would be too cold for the child to remain so long *en route*, and if you don't come soon I shall take to gaming and drinking. I will not hear of your awaiting your confinement there; that could be only provided we were first definitely dissolved or adjourned, and provided I could remain during that time in Reinfeld; for otherwise we are half divorced, since it will then be impossible to return home before May. I sympathize most deeply with our parents' loneliness, but that is the course of events

\* A river near Reinfeld.



for people with daughters; it is none of my doing, but God's, and it will be the same way with us, too, when we are old. Kiss mammy for me, and tell her I will not do it—most certainly not. . . . Best love to father and mother, and to Adelaide.                      Your most faithful                      v. B.

B., Sunday.

(Postmarked *September 16, '49.*)

MY BELOVED HEART,—Yesterday during the session I received your letter, and will now make it my business to answer it.

Do not write so late; do not sit up so long; mammy is quite right in scolding you for it. I must do so, too, reluctant as I am.

Whether I shall really myself come to take you from *Reinfeld* is uncertain, and depends on what matters may be before the Chamber just then. If they are important, I cannot get away for so long, and will only meet you at *Zimmerhausen*. In this you are quite right, that in the autumn air you must make short daily stages, for the child's sake, and still more for your own; neither of you must be fatigued or ride in the night air. Arrange the stops entirely to suit yourself, whether I come or not. If, contrary to expectations, I should not be able to come as far as R. myself, father will surely escort you to *Cöslin* or thereabouts, and *Moritz* come for you there or at *Cöslin*. I took you a distance of about three hundred miles to give our parents pleasure, have been without you for months, so father will not refuse me this knightly service in return, in case I do not come myself. I will not have you travel without male escort, not even by the express. . . .

The lonesomeness of our dear parents is affecting to me, also. I wrote you about it the other day, and can well picture it to myself from my own experience. But just to make it easier for them, we have made the journey to them with the child, and been separated from each other for such a long time; it *cannot* continue forever; times will come, with us, too, if God lets us live, when we shall long for our children, but we, too, shall have, I hope, the consolation of knowing they are happy and in God's hand; then we shall yearn to be with them, and shall love our grandchildren, and be glad if we can live with them for a few weeks in the year. . . .

Good-night, my beloved heart. May God's angels shield you, and do pray for me that I remain faithful to Him; I am getting to be so worldly and so bad-tempered here, when you are not with me. Yesterday *Malle and I* were in Friedrichshain,\* and I could not forgive even the dead, my heart was so filled with bitterness at the idolatry practised about the graves of these criminals, where every inscription on the crosses prates about "Freedom and Right," a mockery to God and men. It is true, I say to myself, that we are all sinful, and God alone knows how He may try us, and Christ our Lord died for yonder rebels, too; but my heart is full of resentment when I see what they have made of my fatherland, these murderers, at whose graves the Berlin citizen worships idolatrously to this day. Farewell, my sweet angel. What have you to do with such things, that I should be writing you about them? Love one thousand times over to mother and father.

Your most faithful                      v. B.

\*Frederick Cemetery.

BERLIN.

(Postmarked *September 19, '49.*)

MY DARLING,—I am again sitting on this tiresome commission, and write to you at the risk of again voting the wrong way. The weather is cold and rainy, and I am worrying lest it may be so when you start. Shall I still see that you get some warm clothing from Schönhausen, or have you everything there—furs, etc.? The child's indisposition will surely not last so long, and, as to your fear of cholera, I have never yet heard that little children at the breast are attacked by it; goodness knows what sort of a blood-and-thunder story some one has hoaxed Louise with—the one she told you, wind-bag that she is! All women are invariably happy if they can frighten and alarm others; it is mere envy of your charming child. . . . Whether I can come to R. to call for you depends entirely upon what matters may be before the Chamber towards the end of the month. You will need a good week for the journey, including one or two days of rest; so that I should want at least ten days' leave, and I cannot yet say whether I can have it. We shall now have in the Chamber the press law and the law on public meetings; the committee's recommendations have generally a decisive influence on the conclusions of the Chamber, and in the committee we are so fixed that it often turns on one vote. If papa cannot accompany you to Zimmerhausen, then I must, of course, go under all circumstances, no matter what may be on hand here; for you *shall* not travel alone, my darling. If it does not rain afterwards, or not hard, I shall buy the waist and send it specially. Give M. and F. my best love; I reproach myself for not writing to our dear parents direct, but I always feel as though I were depriving you of your due, and, at any rate, you can communicate

whatever I could write them. May God protect you! Last night, while reading the 28th Psalm, I thought of you very much, praying that He would keep and preserve you in all that lies before you. Farewell, my angel.

Your most faithful v. B.

Do not speak slightingly of the King; we are both at fault in that respect, and should not speak of him otherwise than of our parents, even if he errs and has faults, for we have sworn faithfulness and homage to his flesh and blood. Once more, farewell, my darling. God preserve you! Our separation will soon be over, and in the course of it I have truly felt how much we have grown together. Thanks be to the Lord therefor, and may He long postpone the *real* separation, for I no longer know what the world is without you.

BERLIN, Friday.

(Postmarked *September 21, '49.*)

I am well, my darling Nan, but I am cold, for in the morning the rooms are already so chilly that I long very much for the Schönhausen fireplaces, and matters in the Chamber are so tedious that I often have serious thoughts of resigning my commission. In the ministry there is again a shameful measure preparing; they now want to submit a real property tax bill, according to which those estates which are not manors are to be indemnified, while the manors must suffer, as the number of nobles is not dangerous. Only if encumbered for more than two-thirds of their value, they are to be assisted by loans. What good will a loan do a bankrupt, who has it to repay? It is a mixture of cowardice and shameless injustice such as I could not have expected. Yesterday we

had soft, warm autumn weather, and I took a long walk in the Thiergarten, by the same solitary paths which we used to traverse together; I sat, too, on our bench near the swan-pond; the young swans which were then still in their eggs on the little island were now swimming vivaciously about, fat, gray, and *blasé*, among the dirty ducks, and the old ones sleepily laid their heads on their backs. The handsome large maple standing near the bridge has already leaves of a dark-red color; I wished to send you one of them, but in my pocket it has become so hard that it crumbles away; the gold-fish pond is almost dried up; the lindens, the black alders, and other delicate things bestrew the paths with their yellow, rustling foliage, and the round chestnut-burrs exhibit a medley of all shades of sombre and attractive fall coloring. The promenade, with its morning fogs among the trees, reminded me vividly of Kniephof, the woodcock-hunt, the line of springes, and how everything was so green and fresh when I used to walk there with you, my darling. . . . On the 1st of October I shall probably have to attend the celebration of the nine-hundredth anniversary of the founding of the cathedral there, to which the King is coming. For the 2d and the following days I have been invited to go on a royal hunt to the Falkenstein. I should be very glad to shoot a deer in those woods which we and Mary saw illuminated by the moon on that evening; but even if matters in the Chamber should not prevent, I am at a loss how to reconcile that with our journey, and I feel as though I should steal my days from you by going. . . . I am now going out to buy a waist, to call on Rauch, and then again to the Thiergarten. All love to father and mother, and may God preserve you in the future as hitherto, my dearest.

Your most faithful

v. B.

BERLIN, *September 25, '49.*

DEAREST NAN,—. . . I shall now, as you wish, take the Behrenstrasse apartment. Bellin writes me in great unhappiness about our not wishing to be at Schönhausen during the winter. It would be more agreeable to me, too, but it will be quite impossible; if you were there, and I were here, it would mean my travelling continually back and forth, and when Christmas-time comes you cannot go through it without me, nor shall you; and who knows but just then I may be needed here, if we remain in session so long. It must, therefore, follow that our pet will not be born behind the red curtain, much as I regret it, if it is to be a boy, and no Schönhauser. Farewell, my beloved angel. A thousand thanks for your precious letters, and write me at once, and at more length than I do; to-day I am too full of politics. . . .

Your most faithful                      v. B.

BERLIN, *September 27, 49.*

MY DARLING,—I see it is much easier to get rid of one's wife than to get her back again; I counted on having you here by the end of this month, and now it is proposed to wait till October 20th. That will not do, my sweetheart. . . . You are now perfectly well; the weather is fine, and the *travelling season* is just about to close its gate, so we must not neglect to avail ourselves of this favorable state of affairs, and I wish you would not wait until the 7th or 8th. If father will have the kindness to escort you as far as Cöslin, and see you safe into the carriage there, you will travel alone only to Zimmerhausen, where I shall meet you. For this purpose, write me the precise day of your leaving Redd., and your arrival. . . . Many thanks for your kind little letter; we agree in everything except the plan of post-



ponement. You are so good about writing that I shall fondle you very much for it when I hold you once more in my arms. I shall treat myself to-day to a bottle of champagne on the score of father's health. Nowadays I am over head and ears in work—so many minor matters to attend to that I am quite harassed. . . .

Your most faithful v. B.

BERLIN, Friday.

(Postmarked *September 28, '49.*)

MY DEAR,—I have taken the apartment in the Behrenstrasse; that on the Thiergarten is too uncomfortable for you in going in and out in wet winter weather. . . . It is better that I should procure and arrange everything for you in advance; then you need only alight here and sink into my open arms and on a ready sofa; that would be so pretty; only come soon, my beloved angel; to-day the weather is already bitter cold, and write me exactly when I can come for you to Z. Do not be offended, either, at my note of yesterday, and do not think that you have offended me, but please come quickly. I am not going to the Harz. Much love. In great haste.

Your most faithful v. B.

Over the blue mountain,  
Over the white sea-foam,  
Come, thou beloved one,  
Come to thy lonely home.

—*Old Song.*

SCHÖNHAUSEN, *October 2, '49.*

MY BELOVED NAN,—I am sitting in our quiet old Schönhausen, where I am quite comfortable, after the Berlin hubbub, and I should like to stay here a week, if the



old Chamber allowed. This morning Odin awakened me, and then retreated as usual between the beds; then the Bellins groaned very much about the bad qualities of the tenant, with whom they lead a cat-and-dog life, and I discussed with her, pro and con, all that is to be sent to Berlin. The garden is still quite green for the fall season, but the paths are overgrown with grass, and our little island is so dwarfed and wet that I could not get on to it; it rains without let-up. The little alderman, of course, sat with me all the afternoon, otherwise I should have written you sooner and more at length. I want to leave again to-morrow morning, and I have still several business letters to write. Yesterday, with the King, I celebrated the nine-hundredth anniversary of the Brandenburg Cathedral, after it had been thoroughly exorcised and the bad national spirits driven out. The entire royal family was there, except the Princess of Babelsberg, who is at Weimar; also Brandenburg, Manteuffel, Wrangel, Voss, and many high dignitaries, among them myself, quite courageously at the front in church, next to the princesses. At dinner his Majesty said many pretty things about his electoral and capital city of Brandenburg, and was also very friendly to me. I introduced to the Queen a number of village mayors, who had been of particular service in my election; they were so much moved by it that afterwards they embraced me with tears in their eyes. Finally, the King became very angry at Patow, who had made his appearance as President-in-chief, and to whom he had not spoken till then. "Sir," said he, in a very loud and angry voice, "if you belong to the Right, then vote with the Right; if you belong to the Left, vote, in the —— name, with the Left; but I require of my servants that they stand by me, do you understand?" Breathless silence, and P—— looked

like a duck in a thunder-storm. . . . It is right good that I did not take the apartment on the Thiergarten; aside from the wet feet which my angel would get in dirty and damp weather, the house has been broken into seven times during the couple of years of its existence, a fact of which sympathizing souls would surely have informed you; and if on some long winter evening I were not at home, you and the two girls and baby would have shuddered mightily over it. The little old clock is just clearing its throat to strike seven; I must to my work. Farewell, dearest; and, above all things, come-mmm quickly—in a hurry, swiftly, instantly—to your dear little husbandkin. Most hearty greetings to our parents. Your most faithful v. B.

BERLIN, 7.

(Postmarked *October 8, '49.*)

*To Frau von Bismarck, Zimmerhausen, near Plathe, in Pomerania:*

MOST BELOVED NAN,—It is so chilly in my little room, and I shall not get any wood to heat it till to-morrow, that owing to cold feet I am writing you only three words, after having at last obtained possession, to-day, of writing materials. I am waiting anxiously for the things from Schönhausen. Bellin began packing on Saturday, and nothing has yet arrived; and I wanted to have everything nicely and comfortably arranged for you before I leave, so that you may not enter cold, dreary lodgings here. I was long in doubt whether I should not surprise you in Cöslin by night, but in that case our things would probably still be standing at the railway station on your arrival, and to-morrow we have a very decisive committee conference on the subject of the Press Act. Day after to-morrow there

is a session on section 105, one of the main points in the Constitution ; I cannot be absent from that. Therefore, unless there is a change, I can only come to Z. on Wednesday, and you will remain there one day longer, which will hardly be disagreeable to you. It is too bad I could not call for you this week ; things would then have been much better so far as the Chamber is concerned, but in that case the whole packing business at Schönhausen should have been arranged sooner. So there are still three times twenty-four hours ; then I shall again have my little vagrant in my arms, and then I will not let you go again so soon, not for ten years ; the old folks may say what they please ; to be without a wife is to lead a dog's life. Kinkel is to go to the penitentiary at Naugard, so Bernhard will be glad. Farewell, my darling. I must go out. My fingers are getting cramped here. Greet all the Zimmerhausners.

Your most faithful                      v. B.

BERLIN, *November 4, 1849.*

*To Frau von Puttkamer, Reinfeld, near Zuckers :*

DEAR MOTHER,—It is true I have strongly intrenched, behind the paper ramparts of Chamber affairs, my laziness in writing, but your smoked meat has victoriously forced its way into this fortress ; it is, or rather it was, too good for this world ; I have, therefore, jointly with Johanna and Malvinia, who breakfasted daily on it while it lasted, taken care that it should not suffer very long. . . . If, as your letter of yesterday indicates, you are afraid that Johanna takes a bloodthirsty delight in the Austrian court-martial, you may be easy on that score. She is so ignorant of public affairs that I had to tell her, and that only after your letter came, that a number of rebels had been hanged in Hun-

gary. But you, my dear mammy, are haunted by Rousseau's educational principles, which brought Louis XVI. to such a pass that he who had shrunk from bringing about the just death of a single human being became guilty of the destruction of millions. You have so much compassion on the family (if one there be) of Bathyany; have you none, then, for the many thousands of *innocent* people whose wives and children have become widows and orphans through the insane ambition or the conceit with which these rebels, like Carl Moor, resolve to make the world happy after *their* fashion? Can the execution of one human being give satisfaction, even to mere earthly justice, for the burned cities, the devastated provinces, the murdered inhabitants, whose blood cries out to the Emperor of Austria that God has intrusted him with the sword of supremacy? Effeminate pity for the bodily pains of the criminal is responsible for most of the bloodshed during the last sixty years. You fear that the Austrian government is pointing out the way to the Democrats, but how is it possible to put on the same level a rightful authority and a party of high treason? The former *owes* to the subjects whom God has intrusted to it the protection of its sword against malefactors; but the rebels continue to be murderers and liars, and if they violently seize that sword, they may kill, but may not judge. I was just now reading to Johanna Luther's sermon on Matthew xviii. 21, etc.; it is full of love and forgiveness, but at the beginning old Luther explicitly says, "Earthly governments are not to forgive, but to punish, wrongs." Excuse my writing you on this at such length, but I feel that it touches me personally, for if I should ever be called upon to exercise governmental authority, I should not like Johanna to look on me with the same eyes as you do on Haynau. . . . The struggle with this

gang of Democrats was, after all, more interesting in the last Chamber than it is now with these insipid Constitution-  
 alists, who preach the same principles as the others did, but have not the courage to carry them out to the end; and they sugar over their poison with hypocritical patriotism, while the kernel always remains egotism and lust of power, in behalf of themselves and of their "intelligent citizens." We are living here in very homelike, quiet fashion, eating with Hans from a tray over a spirit-lamp, struggling with the discomfort of calls to be made and received; and our chief affliction, at least Johanna's, is the little cry-baby, who for several days now has been very good in the day-time, but at night will not yield his right to try the patience of a mother's love. Just now Johanna is taking a nap on the sofa, to recoup what she lost during the night. All this often wears her down very much, but I do not know how to help this, much as it occupies my thoughts, for in another room she gets no sleep at all, because her fancy, with all sorts of bugbears, abides with the child. But God will surely give her strength to carry through that which is in the very nature of a mother's life. I close, dear mother, because I must go out, only I still add hearty love a thousand times over to our dad, and also to the kindly, if somewhat constitutional, people of Reddentin, not forgetting Adelaide. Farewell.

Your faithful son,            VON BISMARCK.

ERFURT, Tuesday.

(Postmarked April 9, '50.)

*Frau von Bismarck, Schönhausen, near Jerichow:*

MY BELOVED NAN,—. . . I cannot yet rid myself of the thought of the pains you must have suffered under the

hand of the old tooth-breaker, and am anxious lest you may be enduring them still; I hope I shall soon receive news of the contrary, my darling. With the disorganized postal service, you will probably not receive this letter until day after to-morrow, your birthday, and I have been much in doubt whether I should not again utilize the two free days to come myself; but besides the duties of secretary, I must now prepare myself in earnest, if I am not to be disgraced on Friday; for I cannot very well keep silent in the position in which I now find myself, for it would be construed on all sides as a cowardly backdown. Gerlach and Stahl were extremely irritated by a remark of mine to the effect that I would leave the honor of the struggle to them alone; and they rightly pointed out to me the duty which, before God and man, I had undertaken in accepting my seat. Therefore, I shall remain here; I could not stay with you, at any rate, for more than twenty-four hours. That I wish you happiness is, perhaps, a superfluous formality; I might just as well wish it to myself; but I will thank you, with my whole heart, for all your love and faithfulness, with which you have brought happiness and quiet into this life of mine, before so grievously lacking in both; for your meekness and patience, with which you help me to endure the trifling sorrows that God's goodness sends us, as well as the more serious ones which my own failings and sharp corners, and the egotism which is stronger in us men than in your sex, bring upon us. I will celebrate your birthday by imploring God, more earnestly than on other days, to keep you in life and good health, to grant me peace and humility, and to let me prove *always*, not merely by my feelings, but by my deeds as well, with unchangeable gentleness and solicitude, the love and faithfulness which I rightly owe to you; and then I hope, too, that God will be



kind to us, and never deprive us of the great mercy which, through and in our married life, He has vouchsafed, and which is daily the principal subject of my thanks; for that do you also implore Him, often and earnestly. Hearty love to mother. Beg her again, in my name, for forgiveness of all my misdemeanors, and tell her "quite frankly" that I, nevertheless, love her very much.

Here is a caller. Good-bye, dearest of all, and may the Lord grant you a happy and healthful birthday.

Your most faithful v. B.

ERFURT, *April 13, '50.*

MY DARLING,—For two days a touch of homesickness, driving me towards you at least by letter, has been struggling in me with the dreary restlessness incident to preparing a speech on the principal question which we are now treating. But as it is gradually growing unlikely that I shall get the floor, since out of sixty-two speakers I drew lot No. 44, and could only get an exchange to No. 26, I will, at the risk of indigestion, swallow my fine phrases, and talk down to the tenor of ordinary mortals. I have received your two letters, my angel, and I thank God that you are well, only I am still furious at the dentist. . . .

So I did not think of you on the 11th? The weather was delightful, and I took a long walk in the woods for three hours, alone with God and my thoughts of you, and of all the good things He has given us. Then I drank your health, with Hans, in champagne. God be with you and our loved ones. I am busy; things are going badly for the Gotha people; the government is intrenching itself against them. Farewell, my most precious, my darling.

Your most faithful v. B.



ERFURT, *April 19, '50.*

MY BELOVED NAN,—It is bad to live in such a small town, with three hundred acquaintances. One is never sure of his life a single moment, for calls. An hour ago I got rid of the last bores; then, during supper, I walked up and down in my room, and annihilated almost the whole fat sausage, which is very delicious, drank a stone mug of beer from the Erfurt “Felsenkeller,” and now, while writing, I am eating the second little box of marchpane, which was, perhaps, intended for Hans, who has not got any of the sausage, even; in its place I will leave him the little ham. During the last few days we have been valiantly quarrelling in Parliament; but neither at the beginning nor later could I obtain the floor for my principal speech; but I relieved myself of some gall in minor skirmishes. . . . I am sick and tired of life here; attending the sitting early in the morning, thence directly to a screaming and chattering *table d’hôte*, then for coffee to the Steiger, a most charming little mountain, a mile from the city, where one can walk about through the pleasantest hours of the day, with a pretty view of Erfurt and the Thuringian woods; under magnificent oaks, among the little light-green leaves of prickles and horn-beam; from there to the abominable party caucus, which has never yet made me any the wiser, so that one does not get home all day. If I do not attend the caucus meetings, they all rail at me, for each one grudges the others any escape from the tedium. . . . Good bye, my heart. May God’s hand be over you and the children, and protect you from sickness and worry, but particularly you, the apple of my eye, whom Röder envies me daily in the promenade, when the sunset makes him sentimental, and he wishes he had such a “good, dear, devout wife.” For the rest, my allowance suffices for my needs

here, and I shall still bring treasures home. Good-night, my darling. Many thanks for your faithful letter, and write me again at once; I am always anxious for news. Hans has just come in, and sends you sleepy greetings, after sitting on the lounge for hardly ten seconds. Once more, good-night, my Nan.

Your most faithful

v. B.

ERFURT, *April 23, '50.*

MY DARLING,— . . . We shall probably be released a week from to-day, and then we have before us a quiet Schönhäusen summer, as the cry of war is also dying. It is really going to be summer again, and on a very long walk, from which I am returning home dead tired, I took much pleasure in the small green leaves of the hazel and white beech, and heard the cuckoo, who told me that we shall live together for eleven years more; let us hope longer still. My hunt was extraordinary; charming wild pine-woods on the ride out, sky-high, as in the Erzgebirge; then, on the other side, steep valleys, like the Selke, only the hills were much higher, with beeches and oaks. The night before starting I had slept but four hours; then went to bed at nine o'clock in Schleusingen, on the south side of the Thuringian wood; arose at midnight; that evening I had eaten freely of the trout and had drunk weak beer with them; at one o'clock we rode to a forge in the mountains, where ghostlike people poked the fire; then we climbed, without stopping, until three o'clock, in pouring rain, I wearing a heavy overcoat; so steep that I had to help myself with my hands; so dark in the fir thickets that I could touch the huntsman ahead of me with my hand, but could not see him. Then, too, we were told there is a precipice on the right, and the torrent

sent up its roar from the purple depths below; or that there is a pool on the left, and the path was slippery. I had to halt three times; repeatedly I almost fainted from weakness, lay down on the dripping heath, and let the rain pour on me. But I was firmly resolved to see the grouse; and I did see several, but could not shoot them, for reasons which one must be a huntsman to understand. My companion shot one, and, if I had been well, I might have shot two; I was too exhausted. After three it cleared and became wonderfully fine, the horn-owl gave place to the thrush, and at sunrise the bird-chorus became deafening; the wood-pigeons singing bass, withal. At five I was down again, and, as it began to pour once more, I abandoned further attempts, returned hither, ate very heartily, after a twenty-four hours' fast, and drank two glasses of champagne, then slept for fourteen hours, until yesterday at one o'clock, noon, and now I am feeling much better than before the excursion, and am glad of the good constitution which God has given me, to get through it all. . . . I send you lots of love, my heart, and will piously celebrate fast-day to-morrow at the Wermel church. God preserve you. Love to mother and Melissa. Excuse my haste. I had really left myself an hour of leisure, but that little old Mass has his fourteenth child, just born. The only son of our poor Eglofstein, of Arklitten, twenty-three-year-old lieutenant of cuirassiers, has shot himself in hypochondria; I pity the father extremely, a devout, honorable man. Your most faithful v. B.

ERFURT, Friday.

(Postmarked *April 27, '50.*)

MY DARLING,—Hans has just gone out to a reception in a white vest and cravat, the same as every evening; it

is just the contrary from what it was in Berlin; he is the society-hunter. I stay properly at home, fix myself tea and lapwings' eggs, which I duly received to-day, unbroken, all nicely packed; a thousand thanks for them. . . . To-day I was again provoked that I did not get the floor; I should gladly have aimed a blow at the babbler Beseler, who, with perfidious garblings, pounced upon our beloved Stahl, who is truly casting his pearls before swine here. He still has pearls left for me, but, nevertheless, the time when our paths diverge will probably come with the years, if we live to see it. Röder\* sends his regards again, and word that his companionship exerts on me a highly beneficial influence, which is daily increasing. . . . How I thank God that you are all well. I am always anxious on that score, and on opening a letter that is always the first thing I look for. As to vaccination against small-pox, I am more in favor of it than opposed to it; if, after Busch's answer, you are still in doubt, send for Dr. Bünger, of Stendal; he is a good physician. . . . Pray for me, as I do for you. Hearty greetings to Mam. and Mel. Your most faithful v. B.

KÜLZ, Sept. 23, '50.

*To Frau von Bismarck, Reinfeld, near Zuckers :*

MY BELOVED NAN,—Father will have told you how we almost missed the mail-coach. . . . A terrible rain-storm at Cöslin; I had an abominable seat in the coach, with a bombardier and a Jew smelling of wet furs; a wretched dinner; the white pillow was my only consolation for the badly covered iron bars against which I rested. William Löper is lying ill of typhus, with little hope, at Colberg, and his wife, a much-desired goldfish of three hundred thousand, is also deadly miserable. Of what good is the

\* At that time a deputy, subsequently *introduceur des ambassadeurs*.

money? Let us be very grateful for our better portion. William Ramin is said to have scraped together what he could, and disappeared, leaving two hundred thousand rix-dollars of debts. I hope it's not so. Lettow was here, and Moritz. The latter full of war business. Here everything is going as usual; Elsie and Jenny are here for good; the gentlemen have just left, and only now do I find leisure to write you, while the ladies are conversing with me. Malvina\* is round as a barrel.

It was right sad and gloomy on our journey to Schlawe, and your little gown still kept waving before me in the dark, like a bright streak between the garden bushes. Let my dear little one not be sad. I shall be back very soon. If you write me directly on receipt of this, address Magdeburg, in care of Gerlach. Do not prepay your letters to me hereafter; I will not do so, either; every one is complaining how many *prepaid* letters are now lost or intercepted, because no further record is kept of them. I give you a thousand kisses, my dear heart; take care of yourself at night, too, and do not get up unnecessarily. Many thanks to mother for everything, and at this moment particularly for the white cushion. Give a hug to our gray-bearded dad, too, and to both the little scamps, and be not discouraged. God will shield us all for His love's sake. To-morrow morning I continue my journey, and shall write wherever I have time. Farewell, my little pink angel.

Your most faithful                      v. B.

BERLIN, Wednesday.

(Postmarked *September 26, '50.*)

MY DARLING,—How is it that to-day is Wednesday? Did I not leave Reinfeld, then, on Saturday afternoon, spend-

\* Mrs. von Bismarck, of Külz.

ing Sunday at Külz, leaving there early on Monday, and arriving here the same day, *i. e.*, last night? *Je n'y comprends rien*, I have lost track of one day; I have only reached Tuesday, but here every one says it is Wednesday; one day less of separation from you; with that I console myself in my bewilderment. . . . Last night, wishing to take out a nightshirt, I found, in place of my own trunk, that of a Jewish tailor, A. Rosenberg, of Cöslin; that brand pursues me. This morning I ascertained that at Stettin they pasted my number on the wrong luggage, and that the Jew *en question* is expected this evening; I have written by the mid-day train, and I hope my things will be sent along, provided they can be identified by the description. So I have had to spend the day here, and at least find time to write you; but I am running about the streets like a ragman. Frau von Manteuffel, whom I visited in this costume, threw up her hands in surprise, and I explained to her how my shabby state was a result of her husband's measures against the landed gentry. She sends you cordial regards, and bids me tell you that the boy's cough and Marie's attacks of sore throat have an intimate connection with the teeth, and will return periodically, but always less severely. . . . I am at a loss to remember what you wished me to get for you in Berlin; I should now have time enough to attend to it. Provided my things arrive to-day, we intend to go to Magdeburg to-morrow, and the following day I shall probably go on to Schönhausen; I dread the solitude; there I shall probably find the first news that you and our little tot are well, and our parents, too; I pray God very earnestly to extend His protection over the little red house, but you have spoiled me by your anxiety, and I have to muster all the little trust I have, so as not to see some misfortune when I think of you. Nothing definite is heard



as yet concerning the assembling of the Houses. The Czar is said to have intimated that he could no longer employ one of his best diplomats as a physician of the insane ; therefore, Meyendorff was to leave, and no envoy be sent here for the present, as sensible people could be of no service to him here. Very flattering, also, for Budberg, who is now managing matters. Radowitz, the great magician, as he is called, stands better than ever with the King, who considers him a martyr for his (the King's) person, as all turn their backs on him ; ministers, chamberlains, court ladies have not a word to say to him, and even the old lackeys with the Iron Cross play pranks on him wherever they can. God mend it. Farewell, my beloved angel. May the Lord preserve you from sickness and misfortune. Give heartiest love to our parents.

Your most faithful and dearest v. B.

SCHÖNHAUSEN, Sunday Evening.

(Postmarked JERICHOW, *September 30, '50.*)

MY BELOVED NAN,—. . . I regained possession of my things in Berlin at some cost, after twenty-four hours had elapsed ; when I left, the unfortunate Jew had not yet claimed his. Partly on my account and partly on Hans's, we had to stay in Berlin two days, but this time the bill was more reasonable. . . . May the devil take politics ! Here I found everything as we left it, only the leaves show the rosiness of autumn ; flowers are almost more plentiful than in summer ; Kahle has a particular fondness for them, and on the terrace fabulous pumpkins are suspended by their vines from the trees. The pretty plums are gone ; only a few blue ones still remain ; of the vine, only the common green variety is ripe ; next week I shall send you some grapes. I have devoured so many figs to-day that I was



obliged to drink rum, but they were the last. I am sorry you cannot see the Indian corn; it stands closely packed, three feet higher than I can reach with my hand; the colts' pasture looks from a distance like a fifteen-year-old pine preserve. I am sitting here at your desk, a crackling fire behind me, and Odin, rolled into a knot, by my side. . . . Mamsell received me in pink, with a black dancing-jacket; the children in the village ridicule her swaggering about her noble and rich relations. She has cooked well again to-day, but, as to the feeding of the cattle, Bellin laments bitterly that she understands nothing about it, and pays no attention to it, and she is also said to be uncleanly; the Bellin woman does not eat a mouthful prepared by her. Her father is a common cottager and laborer; I can easily understand that she is out of place there, with her grand airs and pink dresses. Up to this time the garden, outside of Kahle's keep, has cost one hundred and three rix-dollars this year, and between now and Christmas forty to fifty will probably be added for digging and harvesting, besides the fuel. The contents of the greenhouse I shall try to have taken care of in the neighborhood; that is really the most difficult point, and still one cannot continue keeping the place for the sake of the few oranges. I am giving out that you will spend the winter in Berlin, that in the summer-time we intend going to a watering-place again, and that, therefore, we are giving up house-keeping for a year. . . . Hearty love to our parents. I shall celebrate father's birthday with you, like a Conservative, in the old style. May the merciful God, for His Son's sake, preserve you and the children. Farewell, my dear Nan.                      Your                      v. B.

Since leaving Reinfeld I no longer have heartburn; perhaps it is in my heart, and my heart has remained with Nan.

SCHÖNHAUSEN, *October 1, '50.*

MY ANGEL,—I am so anxious that I can hardly endure being here; I have the most decided inclination to inform the government at once of my resignation, let the dike go, and proceed to Reinfeld. I expected to have a letter from you to-day, but nothing except stupid police matters. Do write very, very often, even if it takes one hundred rix-dollars postage. I am always afraid that you are sick, and to-day I am in such a mood that I should like to foot it to Pomerania. I long for the children, for mammy and dad, and, most of all, for you, my darling, so that I have no peace at all. Without you here, what is Schönhausen to me? The dreary bedroom, the empty cradles with the little beds in them, all the absolute silence, like an autumn fog, interrupted only by the ticking of the clock and the periodic falling of the chestnuts—it is as though you all were dead. I always imagine your next letter will bring bad news, and if I knew it was in Genthin by this time, I would send Hildebrand there in the night. Berlin is endurable when one is alone; there one is busy, and can chatter all day; but here it is enough to drive one mad; I must formerly have been an entirely different mortal, to bear it as I did. . . . The girl received the notice to leave very lightly and good-naturedly, as quite a matter of course; Kahle, on the other hand, was beside himself, and almost cried; said he could not find a place at Christmas-time, and would go to the dogs, as he expressed it. I consoled him by promising to pay his wages for another quarter if he failed to find a place by New Year's. The girl is quite useless except in cooking, of which more orally. I cannot enumerate all the little trifles, and certainly Kahle does not belong to the better half of gardeners. . . . I feel so vividly as if I were with you while writing this that I am becoming quite gay, until

I again recollect the three hundred and fifty miles, including one hundred and seventy-five without a railroad. Pomerania is terribly long, after all. Have you my Külz letter, too? Bernhard has probably kept it in his pocket. Do not prepay your letters, or they will be stolen. Innumerable books have arrived from the binder; he claims one section of Scott's *Pirate* is missing; I know nothing about it. The tailor says that he has been able to make only five pair of drawers from the stuff; presumably he is wearing the sixth himself. Farewell, my sweetheart. Write as often as you can, and give love and kisses to every one from me, large and small. May God's mercy be with you.

Your most faithful                      V. B.

SCHÖNHAUSEN, *October 3, '50.*

MY ANGEL,—I was delighted to get your letter yesterday, and thanked God that you are well. He will surely help the boy to pull through, too. Be sure and don't spoil little Marie, if she is so charming, and do not let her have her own way too much. If the weather at all permits, let her out-of-doors, and the boy, too, if his condition allows of it. I live here very quietly, sleep long, go out walking, attend to my dike duties in the afternoons, and write evenings. Had it not been for Frick's stupid money matters, I could still be staying quietly with you; in Magdeburg, too, they might have done without me; but certainly I don't know how I could have attended to the payments of interest from there; it is difficult to find money in those Rummelsburg hills. . . . I know nothing new since the day before yesterday, except that I am still in anxiety, and love you quite as much as yesterday, and am just as eager for letters; I am writing you to-day primarily to set

you a good example. I must close, for I have just eaten such a hearty supper, with thick gruel, ham and eggs, that I can no longer sit up straight, but am going to pace the floor a bit, and to-morrow I ride out early. Farewell, all three little tots in God's keeping. Dearest love to our parents.

Your most faithful                      v. B.

SCHÖNHAUSEN, *October 8, '50.*

To-day, at last, my darling, I receive the letter which you began on the 2d and posted on the 4th, together with the dike seal; it is certainly strange how slowly the mail travels under Heydt. . . . But as to the girl, my angel, it is quite out of the question; despite your objection, I stick to it that, in the kitchen, at any rate, she is dirty, although she has an incredible amount of washing done for herself: the kitchen looks inordinately greasy, and even Hildebrand, for the first time since I have had him, complains of the food on the score of uncleanness (maggots, mould), and feeds it to Odin. Besides, she is half crazy, burns wax candles, presumably ours (I don't know where they are kept, or how many there were), and when the Bellin woman expresses surprise, she says: "Shall I not do that? I am not used to anything different!" and lets a candle, presumably ours, too, burn down so low in her room as to make a hole in the table. She is half crazy from vanity, and all taken up with her brother, a wholesale merchant in Berlin, who, as she asserts, "bosses the railroad, and can have a locomotive hitched to a car all by himself, and travel wherever he pleases." Drop her, my dear; it is no use keeping her. Alvinia's\* things I shall

\* Nurse.

forward by Hildebrand, and talk to her mother on the occasion of the dike inspection. How sorry I am that the boy disturbs you so much at night! he probably has a slight whooping-cough, it continues with him for such a long time. . . . Hearty love. God keep you and the *babies*. Write me, too, whether I am to send anything *at once*.

Your most faithful

V. B.

SCHÖNHAUSEN, October 10, '50.

MY DARLING,—In a sullen rage I swoop down upon my inkstand after just lighting the Town Councillor downstairs with the kindest countenance in the world. He sat here for two and a half hours by the clock, moaning and groaning, without the least regard for my wry face; I was just about to read the paper when he came. From ten to two I crawled about the Elbe's banks, in a boat and on foot, with many stupid people, attending to breakwaters, protective banks, and all sorts of nonsense. This is, in general, a day of vexations; this morning I dreamed so charmingly that I stood with you on the seashore; it was just like the new strand, only the mud was rocks, the beeches were thick-foliaged laurel, the sea was as green as the Lake of Traun, and opposite us lay Genoa, which we shall probably never see, and it was delightfully warm; then I was awakened by Hildebrand, accompanied by a summoner, who brought me an order to serve as a juror at Magdeburg from October 20th to November 16th, under penalty of from one hundred to two hundred rix-dollars for each day of absence. I am going there by the first train to-morrow, and hope to extricate myself; for God so to punish my deep and restless longing for what is dearest to me in this world, so that we shall not have the fleeting

pleasure of a couple of weeks together, would, indeed, be incredibly severe. I am all excitement; that is our share in the newly achieved liberty—that I am to be forced to spend my few days of freedom sitting in judgment over thievish tramps of Jews, like a prisoner in a fortress. I hope Gerlach can free me; otherwise I shall never speak to him again. To-morrow I shall at once drop you a line from Magdeburg, to tell you how I succeed. . . . The people have abandoned the dike-captain conspiracy against me; the Town Councillor says he will not press it at all. He chattered to me for hours about his land-tax commission, in which his anxiety drove him to rage against his own flesh, and also, unfortunately, against ours. Our chief misfortune is the cowardly servility towards those above and the chasing after popularity below, which characterize our provincial councillor; consequently public business, the chase, land-tax, etc., are all deleteriously affected. It is due principally to the fact that he is grossly ignorant and bungling in affairs, and is, therefore, for better, for worse, in the hands of his democratic circuit secretary, to whom he never dares to show his teeth; and, despite all that, the fellow wears trousers, has been a soldier, and is a nobleman. La-Croix is district-attorney at Madgeburg, withal, and he, too, must help me to sneak out of it. It is still impossible for me to acquiesce in the notion that we are to be separated all winter, and I am sick at heart whenever I think of it; only now do I truly feel how very, very much you and the *babies* are part of myself, and how you fill my being. That probably explains why it is that I appear cold to all except you, even to mother; if God should impose on me the terrible affliction of losing you, I feel, so far as my feelings can at this moment grasp and realize such a wilderness of desolation, that I would then cling so



to your parents that mother would have to complain of being persecuted with love. But away with all imaginary misery; there is enough in reality. Let us now earnestly thank the Lord that we are all together, even though separated by three hundred and fifty miles, and let us experience the sweetness of knowing that we love each other very much, and can tell each other so. To me it is always like ingratitude to God that we choose to live apart so long, and are not together while He makes it possible for us; but He will show us His will; all may turn out differently; the Chambers may be dissolved, possibly very quickly, as the majority is probably opposed to the Ministry. Manteuffel was resolved upon it in that event, and it seems that Radowitz, since he is Minister, has approached him, and, in general, wants to change his politics again. Best love to all. Farewell. God keep you.

Your most faithful

v. B.

SCHÖNHAUSEN, *October 12, '50.*

MY BELOVED NAN,—I hasten to inform you of the particulars of my Magdeburg expedition, and the prospects of my getting rid of the jury nuisance. First of all, I went to Gerlach, who told me he could do nothing in the matter, but that the decision as to the validity of excuses rests solely with the presiding judge, Meier; the latter, a baptized Jew, gave me the same answer, referring me to Fritze, the director of the criminal court, who in turn said, again, that he, for his part, could make no change in the list approved by the court; that he had done so once, and been severely reprimanded for it, and that he had risked having all the proceedings attacked by counsel for the accused as invalid for informality. That the only thing for me was to



put in writing my reasons (which he thought valid) for wishing to be excused, and that the court, on assembling on the 22d, would consult the other jurors, and decide whether it was permissible to excuse me. He, as well as other members of the court, were of opinion that I should be released. I have looked up a whole lot of people, partly even in the witness-room of the criminal jail. Then I begged the government to claim my services as captain of the dikes for the time of the inspection, and they have promised to do so; but that will only help me for the first days, even if the court should recognize such a claim. I believe I shall get out of it, but I shall not know definitely till the 22d. If I fail, I shall at least be able to obtain my dismissal a few days after reaching Magdeburg, and shall then stay with you until after the Chambers are opened, which will probably be on the 15th; as, in all probability, not much of moment will come before them at the beginning. Yesterday I was so angry about the whole business at Magdeburg that I thought I should be ill, and went to bed here with a slight fever; but to-day I am quite well, only I am very sad over the possibility, still not removed, of having to stay away from you still longer, and seeing our short time together still further curtailed. It is truly an incredible arrangement that thirty-six people in the district, of whom only twelve are made use of, may, without having committed any crime, simply at the caprice of a magistrate, be condemned to four weeks' confinement at Magdeburg, and without living at the King's expense, either, like other prisoners; and that only a week's notice is given of such a thing. Since '48 how little have I been at home, and now I am to be imprisoned in the fortress the few days left me to arrange for a long absence. Withal, the whole thing rests essentially on the ignorance of the

court; they had proposed, with the best of intentions, to draft jurors only from Magdeburg and its immediate vicinity, and they do not know that only two places in the whole district are farther away than Schönhausen, namely, Hohengöhren and Neuermark: there the district ends. Gerlach was quite at a loss to comprehend why I should be so anxious to avoid a duty which we ought to be eager to perform; he considered only the inconvenience and tedium of staying four weeks in Magdeburg; such a thing as longing for wife and child he appears neither to experience nor to suspect in others, and disposed of that with a smile and a shrug of the shoulders. I was in such a rage that they were both offended, and he remarked that, once I was angry, it seemed to me immaterial with whom, and he is right, in a measure. After having vented my ire internally on the return journey, and also externally upon Magistrate Alvensleben, who sat in the coupé with me from M. to Genthin, and left me somewhat hurt, I prayed God in the evening to pardon my unruliness, and submitted to His will; perhaps it is only a merciful hint from Him to show me, in my excited dissatisfaction over our separation, that it could very easily be worse, and we will endure obediently what He imposes on us, and not make each other more sad. I shall be thankful and content that He allows us all to be alive and well, and does not punish me more severely for my many sins. I had at first intended to go to Reinfeld at once, and be here again on the 22d; but if they had discovered that, they would certainly not let me go, alleging that my business is settled. Now, too, I cannot get away because of money matters. . . . Yesterday the mamselle made me a fricassée in which there was so much mould that I was frightened; in fact, the food she prepares oftentimes tastes so strange that I be-

gin to be nauseated. Just now I had some smoky milk-porridge for supper, and must close so that I may still write to Bernard, who has been expecting me for a week, in order to invite the Arnims to meet me. Do not grieve, my beloved heart, over all our little vexations; if only God will preserve your health and the children's—I pray for that with immoderate passion—then He will surely grant us a happy meeting very soon. A dissolution of the Houses some time before Christmas seems to me not improbable. Love one thousand times over to our parents.

Your ardently loving and most faithful v. B.

SCHÖNHAUSEN, Monday.

(Postmarked JERICHOW, *October 15, '50.*)

. . . In the matter of the jury there has been no change as yet; I am awaiting every mail-day a certificate from the government that I am indispensable here, in order to submit it with a request to be released, which I have already drawn up. It is damp and cold here continually, raining from morning till night, but in the garden things are still rather green, although already of a faded appearance. Tomorrow there will be a grand dinner at Genthin; but I shall not go, as I have no appetite for their bad wine and their constitutional toasts, but shall celebrate his Majesty's birthday alone with old Bellin, and hope to receive at dessert the longed-for tidings from you. Do not be hindered from writing me. If perhaps some one has fallen very ill, any news at all is better than this distressing silence, which gives most senseless scope to the imagination. This jury business, and the dike nuisance, rent liquidations, tedious neighbors, the bad weather, and the solitude have put me so out of sorts that I am heartily sick of Schönhausen, and, nevertheless, I lack decision when a pur-

chaser comes, as I look on the old walls and the high trees which stand motionless in the rain. Alvensleben the other day again accosted me about it. Then, too, my cigars have suddenly given out. My next letter I am going to address to mother, otherwise she will not write to me again; only I am too ill-tempered to-day, and should, after all, only vex her by my effusions. Do not worry, my darling, thinking I am angry over the want of letters; I am only anxious, and in bad humor, withal, owing to the absence of anything that could cheer me; but please do write, every mail-day if possible, be it but one little word; it is always the only ray of light in my solitude, whenever Hildebrand brings me a letter marked "Zuckers." God is gracious and merciful, and will hear my prayer and shield you from harm. To His protection I commit ourselves and all Reinfeld, with all that is therein. Farewell, my heart, and write, write, write to

Your most faithful

v. B.

SCHÖNHAUSEN, *October 15, 1850.*

DEAR MOTHER,—I had hoped to be with you again for your birthday; to the delay of the dike inspection is due the fact that I can only in writing express my most hearty congratulations; I thank God that He has preserved you to us, through the great amount of trouble and sickness which you have suffered with us during your year just passed, and I pray Him to preserve to us henceforth, too, your faithful support; and I thank you, dear mother, for the rich measure of love for us, which has always endured to overflowing, and with which you have constantly met me, even though you sometimes believed I did not realize it as you had a right to expect. God is my witness,

or, rather, yours for me, that I have often had to ask His forgiveness for wrong done to you, and that I have prayed to Him for strength to fill my stubborn heart with humility and peace. May He, by His Holy Spirit, support me in it; then I shall have to ask less forgiveness of you during next year, dear mother, than in this. I believe we have both experienced, too, that the Lord helps us to round off the edges which must be polished smooth in every newly formed relation between persons who are past the age of early youth, which is easily moulded and pliant, and He will also help us in it henceforth. If there have been discords between us, they were, after all, but superficial; we, who four years ago to-day were like utter strangers, and hardly had any common acquaintances, have, nevertheless, in the course of time, through war and peace, and with ever less war and ever more peace, approached so near to each other that, outside of Johanna, I have not any one, not even my brothers and sisters, with whom I share so frankly and openly my cares and joys, internal as well as external, and am always certain of true sympathy, even in those cases in which I might expect to have forfeited it; that is surely more than any one whose relationships I have come to know can say of himself and his mother-in-law. If I could succeed, with God's help, in banishing out of my heart its fierce temper and mastering the ill-nature which casual vexation easily brings to expression in my manner, then there would never be a moment in which you would doubt my deep and warm love, or my gratitude to you; but only the grace of God can make one person out of the two in me, and so strengthen in me His redeemed portion that it shall kill the devil's share; it must come at last, otherwise it would go ill with me. But, believe me, the man of God in me loves you deeply, though

the devil's slave may provoke you, and the former is full of gratitude for all your kindness, faithfulness, and your forgiving nature, even though the other behaves like an icicle. God will certainly stand by His portion, so that He remains Master of the house, and the other one can only show himself in the hall, even if he sometimes acts there as if he were host.

To-day I have at last received a long-desired letter from Johanna, and yesterday I wrote a very impatient one. My poor dear is suffering in tooth and eyes; do see that she is very careful of herself, so far as is possible, without burdening you, and do not let her foolishly strain her eyes with writing and working by artificial light. To-morrow morning I have the Trübe inspection, and the following day I begin packing Johanna's commissions; a week from to-day is dike inspection, and I hope to be able to leave two days later, if only I am first rid of the jury. Farewell, dear mother. Heartfelt love to father from

Your faithful son, V. BISMARCK.

SCHÖNHAUSEN, *October 17, '50.*

MOST BELOVED NAN,—One thousand thanks for your two nice letters yesterday and the day before. So now you are behaving properly! I wrote to you and to mother by the mail of day before yesterday. Yesterday Trübe inspection. Starting out at seven o'clock, to a place behind Havelberg, mostly afoot, I plodded through ten or twelve miles of swamps, in great boots, then regaled myself at Jederitz with peasants' sausage and schnapps; did not return for dinner till dark, and was dead tired; foolishly read Scott's *Monastery* during half the night, and slept like a top until 10.30, so that I can only hurriedly



give you my thanks and tell you I am well, before going to Scharteucke. I have just extracted from all your letters a whole sheet of commissions, and instructed the Bellin woman to look for everything. Yesterday I was in a wonderfully pretty primeval oak forest (you must go there with me in the summer by water), leading to a charming little river; oaks twenty-five feet in circumference. At dinner-time to-day I shall drink to dear mammy's health. God preserve our dear parents, and you and the children and your

Most faithful

v. B.

Nothing new as yet concerning the jury; but a week from to-day I expect to be on the way to my angel.

SCHÖNHAUSEN, *October 18, '50.*

MY DARLING,—Yesterday I received your letter of the 14th, and thank God that you in Reinfeld are well, after your fashion. Only dear mother is so pestered with swollen feet; I beg her earnestly to take care of herself when she is sick, and to leave to you the nightly disturbance, if you are well, or to the numerous serviceable spirits at Reinfeld; the most robust constitution must at last succumb, if it is constantly deprived of regular sleep, and the old night-watchman's saying, "Mortal watching cannot help, God in heaven see to it," is true for children, if anywhere. At Scharteucke there was a real fairy festival yesterday; the house has become more and more like a casket of treasures; to the right, on entering, a very handsome round balcony has been opened out on the garden; the table and everything on which there is room is overloaded with bric-à-brac, marble vases, and all the little playthings in which childless people commonly seek variety; I would



not give Marie's little finger for all the attractive luggage; but you, you like bric-à-brac? . . . It is doubtful whether, at best, I shall be with you as early as the 27th. . . . Perhaps I can write more definitely in my next letter. But I shall only ascertain for certain on Wednesday whether I am rid of the jury, and then it will be too late to order horses for Sunday (27th) to Schlawe, therefore I shall probably have to take the extra-post. Hearty love to our parents. God keep you.

Your most faithful                      v. B.

SCHÖNHAUSEN, *October 21, '50.*

MY BELOVED NAN,— . . . With your letter I received another, which somewhat embarrasses me; it is an invitation from the King to be in Letzlingen the 28th and 29th, with a summons to acknowledge receipt of the missive at once, and to appear at Letzlingen as early as the evening of the 27th. Now I shall only ascertain by the mail of day after to-morrow, the 23d, whether I shall get rid of the jury, and it is possible—it has even been covertly told me by the court officers themselves—that all they will expect of me will be that, after the dike inspection is completed, I shall present myself for a few days at Magdeburg, simply for honor's sake, after which I shall be excused for the rest of the time on the plea of business, so that I shall have to be in Magdeburg, say, on Friday and Saturday. On Saturday the King is to pass through there, and then it cannot but happen that he will learn from his hunting companions of Magdeburg (Witzleben, Hirschfeld) that I was seen there, and that the excuse which I might give, that I was already on the way to Pomerania, or what not, was a mere pretence; and, if I must stay so long, anyway, I shall be glad to take in the chase, too. On the other hand,

if, as I like to imagine, I get away altogether from jury duty, I could be ready to leave on Friday, or, at the latest, Saturday, and be with Nan on *father's birthday*, or, at any rate, on Monday, as I wrote you last night, and at the same time ordered horses. In short, if I knew that I could leave on Friday, then I should leave, but if I must stay until Sunday, at any rate, I should go to the King, too. But much as I may tramp back and forth in my little room, and look at the glimmering peat in the fireplace, it is quite certain that, even if the court people write very promptly, I shall not know for certain till the day after to-morrow. The chase I should like to take part in, and I should also be glad to speak to the King with the leisure which is usual there; but then, my angel, I cannot be with you before November 2d; that makes four or five days of the short time during which we shall be together, and if I cannot leave before Saturday, I shall be in danger of meeting the King's train, and it is possible that I shall have to do jury duty, anyway, for two or four days. I believe I wrote you yesterday that I am already excused for the days of the dike inspection, up to and including Thursday; those people are, after all, then, not so surly as is supposed. I appear to myself so stupid in my indecision; so stupid when, after laboriously overcoming all obstacles with God's gracious help, I, nevertheless, remain here for the sake of a chase, and again stupid when I sit in Magdeburg and see the King riding through with rifle and hanger and cannot go along. Bellin, who has just been here, says, of course, that I must go to the chase. I was just counting my buttons, and wondering whether, in such childishness, I ought to think of God or not; but, after all, the thought of Him does make me come to a decision, for the simple reason that I cannot decline the invitation with-

out telling an untruth; for I certainly would not allege simply that I longed to be with you at once, although that is as cogent a reason as any other, but it is not presentable at court. But, on the other hand, if I lie, and must stay here, anyway, it will serve me right; if I stick to the truth, I can certainly say, "as God will." It is quite probable, too, that the King wishes to speak to me; for otherwise I do not know why I should be honored again, and, withal, not as a "gentleman from the neighborhood," who are always invited for a particular day only, and in a certain fixed rotation, but rather as "guest of the castle," *i.e.*, for the whole chase, with night lodgings; and I am, by explicit order, to come as early as Sunday, whereas usually the gentlemen appear only on the morning of the chase, and return home after dinner. Pardon me for writing so much idle chat, but I am simply setting down how my thoughts have swayed back and forth for the last two hours, and how I seem to myself now as one who wantonly rejects that for which he has prayed God passionately, our early reunion; and anon, as one who in Magdeburg hankers after the chase as the fox after grapes, and dreads being found out like one caught in a trap by his own false excuses. The more I picture that to myself, the more am I resolved to acknowledge receipt for the present, and accept the invitation, and then wait and see how it may be arranged, and what decision God will allow me to adhere to. If I can and will leave sooner, I can still forward to Letzlingen on Thursday some pretext or other that I may consider valid, "His Lordship begs to be excused; he has taken ship for France." . . . To-day the weather has been charming—sunshine, even warm. The garden is still pretty well foliaged; the cherry-trees of a reddish tint, the lindens yellow, the numerous wild maples in the thicket are pale yellow, the oaks still

green, and the acacias full and dark-green as in June. On the whole, green still predominates, and the trees retain their foliage, though there is the rustling of autumn under foot. I have given Bellin instructions as to what he is to plant in the bosket, and eight or nine more young chestnuts in the great avenue. . . . Farewell, my beloved angel. Next week, at any rate, whether at its beginning or its end, I hope to hold you in these arms of mine, and the children, too. Much love to mother and father. I shall bring along the cigar-case, even though it is *mout. après dîner*; otherwise it will still be the wrong one. Good-night, my darling; to-morrow I have dike inspection, so I must do a little more writing. God preserve you and

Your most faithful

v. B.

BERLIN, Sunday Morning.

(Postmarked *November 16, '50.*)

MY MOST BELOVED NAN,—If you have not trusted implicitly in God, you have had a needless alarm. For the present there is not the least probability of war; so little that there appears to be some embarrassment about getting rid of the masses of troops in a decent way. On the principal question at issue, how matters shall be handled in Germany hereafter, the Austrians have yielded; so, too, their troops in Hesse will remain for the present, and ours will keep the three Prussian highways through Hesse occupied. The Hessian and Holstein matters, moreover, are not of sufficient interest to Prussia, or to our party in particular, to make it profitable to sacrifice people for them, and soldiers at that. I arrived here day before yesterday at 10 P. M.; went at once for Stockhausen; did not find him; then to Manteuffel (and again in travelling

attire, as I either left the key at R. or lost it), who asked me not to go to Stendal at all, as the Chamber people were urgently needed here; and, as I awoke yesterday morning with a raging headache, I did not go. During the day I heard from all well-informed quarters that there was no probability of war, certainly not for the present; so I remained here quietly, and am only writing to Stendal; I have also written the major asking why Hildebrand is not on hand, and that if he is to come they should send the order to him at Reinfeld; if he receives it, he must leave at once. Mousquetaire can stay at home for the present. The armaments are continued until the negotiations with Austria are really concluded, provided the Austrians do not dismiss their troops sooner. The immediate cause of the mobilization was that Austria drafted one hundred and fifty thousand men, and that eighty thousand Austrians in all are posted in Bavaria and Bohemia, who could be before Berlin in two weeks' time, without anything opposing them. . . . The King and the Prince of Prussia are for war, and the Ministers have a hard time to oppose it (but nothing must be said to any one about that, except to your parents); the Chambers, if they are very reckless, can still bring about war; but it is hardly probable. My position in the squadron will be filled, and if it does come to blows unexpectedly, I shall be utilized somewhere else. God protect you and ours henceforth with His true love.

Your most faithful *forever*,

V. B.

Do not worry about my health; I am very well to-day, and only had a headache yesterday because I had foolishly eaten nothing on the road. I have still much writing to do. I shall be with you at Christmas, as I never doubted.

BERLIN, Monday Evening, *November 18, '50.*

MOST BELOVED NAN,—I wanted to write you yesterday and to-day, but my soles are still burning, I may say with the Moor in “Fiesco”; just at present this is a scene of the most miserable intrigues one can imagine. Gotha, the bureaucracy—yea, it is sad to relate, the court—all are working together for Manteuffel’s downfall, but God has given me reasonable hope that they will not succeed. Manteuffel’s fall would mean, just now, a return of the Radowitz principle, defended by straw puppets whom he leads—war with all monarchical states, in the background revolutionary imperialism, whose mantle now, after years of preparation by Radowitz, is perhaps more dazzling than before. If M. remains, there is every prospect of an early, honorable peace, whose main feature would be that Prussia and Austria would become reconciled to each other, with entirely equal rights, at the expense of the small states. I pity Manteuffel; he looks like a candidate for nervous fever, or something worse, when he gets tired at night. From the most diverse quarters people feel authorized to call him cowardly and corrupt; even his two Radowitz colleagues are intriguing against him, and he goes his own way with Stockhausen, quite undisturbed. All day yesterday I manipulated the Centre, with unhopcd-for success, mainly because diplomatic communications “had placed me in a position” to make clear their total ignorance of the state of affairs. I send this to Bernard, who wants news, and my time is very limited. I beg Bernard to send this along immediately. Hearty love goes with it. So far as can at present be foreseen, Manteuffel will surely retain a majority in the first Chamber, and pretty certainly in the second, and then all is well, even if, contrary to expectation, war should



still come; then we shall probably only have Austria and Bavaria against us, and for them, with God's help, we are quite strong enough.      Your most faithful      V. B.

The preparations will *not* cease until we have attained what we desire.

BERLIN, November 22, '50.

Like last year, my darling, I am writing you at the green table directly under the platform, amid the noise and disturbance of the Chamber. Pardon my letters being rarer now than from Schönhausen; my longing for you, whenever I have a moment's quiet in the confusion, remains the same. All the occupation and intrigue of the year 1848 is as nothing to these days. *So far* no one here has any doubts of peace, although from morning till night I have had to defend its necessity against quite sensible people with the same warmth with which I disputed last night against General Gerlach for the necessity of war under certain circumstances (*i. e.*, excessive Austrian impertinence). We both became very angry; so did even Hans, who quite agreed with me. Gerlach takes altogether a lawyer's view of the matter, and considers Austria to be in the right. But we cannot permit one hundred thousand Bavarians and Austrians to post themselves between our eastern and western provinces. Russia seems to support, so far, all our demands that are prompted by a feeling of military pride, as well as our claims for enlargement of power; if only Holstein becomes quiet, and we drop the *parliamentary* confederation.

I am well, and this harrying makes me, happily, smaller in girth. . . . Farewell, my love. God preserve you and ours. Love to all.      Your most faithful      V. B.



BERLIN, *November 24, '50.*

MY BELOVED NAN,—It seems to me as though I had not written to you for an eternity, but, when I calculate, it was day before yesterday ; since then I have experienced, talked, and done much, so that it seems to me like a fortnight. To my knowledge, there never was a time when the fate of seventy millions of people stood on the pinnacle of chance, as it does here at present ; every moment presents a different picture. This morning I ordered field equipments for myself at the cobbler's and tailor's, looked for horses, and was just about to write for Mousquetaire, and this afternoon peace seems to be again quite near, almost certain ; Sesselberg, who, like all citizens, at heart desires peace at any price, has cried twice from fright, on my telling him that my long boots must be ready in the evening, and twice wanted to embrace me when I revoked the order. If we remain at peace, God has deemed me worthy to assist in it, because diplomats and Ministers find in me, as they did in '48, a convenient and unofficial mediator, through whom it is easier to negotiate than by official notes. I have sent what I may call a special envoy to our old friend with the big feet, namely, the husband of your most respected friend, who sends you cordial regards ; I put him on the train at twelve last night, and this morning at seven I was again negotiating with the wife, who must, *nolens volens*, help diplomatize. War would now be rank nonsense, and would result from the very first in our government making a slide of ten miles farther towards the left. . . . After the death of hundreds of thousands and the squandering of a hundred millions, the present grounds of quarrel would seem trifles to any one in retrospect, while the devastation of Europe for their sake would appear to be sacrilege. All are agreed on the principal matters, the

future of Germany; the only question is whether and to what degree we shall abandon the occupation of Kassel, which was undertaken on Radowitz's initiative, against the law of nations and the Constitution of the Confederation, which we ourselves have recognized as valid. Already they have practically agreed on joint occupation, and yet for the sake of such bagatelles there still remains the gravest danger that conservative armies, which love and respect each other, will tear each other to pieces, and that Germany's destinies will be intrusted to strangers, as must inevitably happen in case of a rupture between ourselves and Austria. England admonishes us to peace and leaves us in the lurch; France wants her president to take the imperial crown in Cologne Cathedral, and our own ally is *il re traditore* (as both parties call him in Turin) and the democracy of all countries. Robert Blum's bust, draped with *black-and-white* sashes and cockades, is the emblem by which members of the Berlin militia, and democrats of all countries here, at Frankfort-on-the-Main, and elsewhere, celebrate their festivities and swear vengeance on monarchs; to this has Prussia grown. It is for these people we shall be victorious, if we are victorious; and every democrat will exhibit his wounds to the King as an unpaid bill, when, with his help, we have conquered. I cannot restrain my tears when I reflect what has become of my pride, my joy, my fatherland, the faithful, brave, honest Prussian nation, intoxicated by the giddy cup which they call Prussian honor, in the leading-strings of a gang of Rhenish place-hunters and scoffing democrats. "I know of no honor which begins where ordinary common-sense ends," Stockhausen said to a high personage who grossly insulted him, and *I* know of no honor which consists in damning the path of revolution in words and following it in deeds.

I cannot be undisturbed for a moment; there are unconscionable people who consider me a bureau of newsy gossip, sit for hours and smoke, until I openly request them to leave me. Now I must go again to Manteuffel; to-day or to-morrow it must be decided whether he or Ladenberg remains.

*The 25th.*—To-day the prospects of peace have drawn very near. It is to be hoped that to-morrow Manteuffel will have a conference with Schwarzenberg at Oderberg, but the ambition of Frau von Ladenberg to pose as Countess of Brandenburg, and the Prince of Prussia's passion for war, may quite as suddenly rob us again of the prospect of peace. As yet Hans and I have not had a minute's time to look for lodgings. The jacket, etc., and your dear little letter I received to-day, and unfortunately burned it at once, as I have no locker. Now I don't know the four remedies for boys; camomile I send at once, and shall ask Bücking; order the rest, prepaying postage, at the Unicorn Pharmacy—the street is Kurstrasse, I believe, but it is unnecessary to mention it. I read daily in the little Testament, and yesterday I listened to a noble sermon by Büchsel, cutting to the quick, Psalm xc., verse 12, festival for the dead. He spoke strongly against war. I pray for you and the children. Farewell, my angel.

Your faithful

V. B.

Are you, then, in need of treatment for yourself?

B., November 27, '50.

MY DARLING,—My horses are *not yet* to leave, but must keep in marching order; things look quite peaceable to-day. Manteuffel has a conference with Prince

Schwarzenberg on the frontier to-morrow, which of itself is great progress. Hildebrand is to leave if ordered, but then some one must be found who can, if necessary, start at a moment's notice with the horses.

You have doubtless received my Bücking letter; I shall send the Russian leather; if I should go out with the army, you will receive the rent-roll. I am still of opinion that I shall be here at Christmas. I am well, but am anxious about the boy, and have election and diplomatic business day and night. Manteuffel asked yesterday to be dismissed; that was refused, therefore *his* politics are on top to-day; God grant it may last; may He preserve you and restore our youngster. I am well, but tired.

Your most faithful

v. B.

BERLIN, *December 7, '50.*

MY HEART, MY DEAR,—I shall ask you by word of mouth, with cogent reasons, to forgive me for writing you so seldom and hurriedly; and will only tell you that I love you, and shall love you forever. Give thanks with me to the Lord who grants us peace, and has not denied His blessing to my own modest work. Tuesday, the 10th, I think it is, I expect to leave here early, and therefore beg for horses for Wednesday. If I only knew what to bring along for you, my heart! Should I have to stay here a day longer, I shall write to the inn-keeper at Schlawe that the horses are to wait. Privy-Councillor-of-Justice Pöltz will probably be made Minister of Agriculture, Raumer Minister of the Interior, Manteuffel Prime Minister; Uechtritz *cultus*. Ladenberg goes. A thousand hearty greetings.

Your most faithful

v. B.

(Postmarked *December 30, '50.*)

MY DARLING,—The mail does not leave on the 7th, but on the 5th, *via* Stolp; so I came too late. I could not turn back to-day, the horses were tired, and to-morrow it would only mean riding back and forth. I am feeding them here at Venzke; and shall then ride to Reddentin, to go on to-morrow about noon, by stage. That is very annoying; perhaps I may see Albert still. Who knows what good may come of it? From Külz I shall again write you a word, my angel. Would that I had remained, but then, perhaps I should be too late to-morrow. God keep you from illness. Hearty greetings to F. and M. I might have inquired beforehand, if I were what I am not, a prudent man; but I am your dearest, nevertheless.

Your most faithful

v. B.

BERLIN, *January 4, 1851.*

I have just now, my dear, received your letter of the 1st and 2d, and am very much worried over the illness of our dear little midget. I still hope that it will prove to be a result of the Christmas indigestion; but then it may be scarlet-fever, by the symptoms you mention. I have spoken to a few people here who know scarlet-fever, who in some degree quiet my apprehensions, since the disease, while at present widespread, is mild in its attacks. Do write me, if possible, a line every day, as to her condition; if you wish it, I will come over, in case the thing becomes worse. It is not necessary to remind me to remember little Marie in my prayers; I do so daily, and trust to the Lord that He will not try us beyond our strength. . . . I have again got into the old hurry, having been up to-day before daylight, and to bed at one yesterday. How painful it is to

me that you spent New Year's Eve so sorrowfully! I was, in fact, at Külz, and drank punch in which Tarragon vinegar had been mixed by mistake. But take care of your health, my angel, and don't presume on your strength; it will follow you up later, even if you don't feel it at once; you are too much weakened from nursing. I write you in the confusion of the presidential election, with people next to me who look into my letter from right and left, and interrupted every moment by curious questioners. Hearty greetings to father and mother. Let nothing disturb you in the belief that I love you as a part of myself, without which I would not and cannot live, at least what one may call living; I am afraid I should never amount to anything that will please God if I did not have you; you are my anchor on the good side of the shore; if it gives way, may God have compassion on my soul! May God's mercy help us graciously through every trouble, and especially allow our dear little child to abide with us and recover.

Your most faithful

V. B.

BERLIN, *January 7, 1851.*

For four days, my darling, I have been in the utmost anxiety, and after your last letter it could not be otherwise. Has little Marie the scarlet-fever? Does she live? Are all well? Why do I receive no news? Owing to these questions I can't go to sleep, and I lie awake at night; I must at last believe that you, my heart, have become ill from exertion and night-vigils, else you would not be so merciless as to write me that the child has scarlet-fever and then be silent four days; every morning I have gone to the post-office, and always in vain. I should scold much if I did not believe that you yourself are ill, or per-



haps sad and anxious. Surely you will not keep bad news from me; when one knows the disease, fancy brings daily the worst news possible. If you are sick, some one else might mercifully drop me a line, for I can't endure this uncertainty. There is nothing terrible which I have not experienced in spirit during these days. For the rest I am physically well. Yesterday I dined with the King; he and the Queen were very gracious to me. In the Houses no improvement is apparent since December 4th, and a dissolution, even if delayed for some weeks, seems inevitable. How I long to be with you again! If the dissolution does not come, we can no longer remain parted thus. Yesterday, in prayer, I thought I was assured that all was well with you and Marie; during the night and to-day I am again anxious beyond measure. You know not, unfortunately not, how I love you, else you would know how I suffer in this uncertainty; after all, I am most anxious about you. Marie's condition may since have been better or worse; anxiety and night-watching have probably got the better of you, and therefore I receive no news. Do, please, write me, and never let me be again so tantalized as in these four days; you have no idea what it means to be far away from all one loves and to receive a letter containing news of a deadly, dangerous sickness, and nothing thereafter for four mails. God grant that all my sad fancies are empty and groundless, and that to-morrow I shall receive good news, or *news*, at any rate, for any is better than none. The Lord bless and keep you and all I love. Do not think I am angry; I am only sad and apprehensive, and I should not love you if I were not so. Farewell, my heart, and write to

Your most faithful

v. B.



BERLIN, Wednesday, *January 8, '51.*

To-day, at last, my love, I have received your letter of Saturday; it is too bad about Heidt; four days *en route*. If the news does not entirely reassure me, at any rate it does not seem to be scarlet-fever; that goes on rising steadily without change. You don't write what the doctor says about it. Of course, prayer is better than pills, but don't neglect the human help that God offers, and don't spare *any* expense in this matter. . . . Oh, my beloved heart, if we were only safely reunited again! I pray to God, in the Chamber and on the street, that it may please Him not to take from us that which He so graciously gave to us. On Friday I must go to Genthin. Hearty greetings to father and mother.                      Your most faithful                      V. B.

BERLIN, *January 15, '51.*

. . . Praise and glory be to God that He has heard our prayers; may He also hereafter not look upon our sins, but be gracious to us. A thousand thanks for having written to me so faithfully, and a thousand thanks to all who have faithfully helped us to bear our troubles! . . . I believe I have not written you for three days; forgive me, but immediately on getting out of bed I must usually go on the street, to the bank, to Ministers, to Wagner, and go home to get hurriedly into a dress-coat for dinner, and then not again before midnight, including commission, committee, and diplomatic evening-conspiracy. Then I think I shall write to-morrow morning, and already before rising some mortal of a Senfft or a bank personage is on hand. I often receive several calls, even from entire strangers, while in bed, because whenever any one is in the room I do not get up without a screen. Is General

Grünwald, who is here now, an acquaintance of yours? The Emperor's Adjutant-General, somewhat taller than I, about fifty years old, pock-marked, a small mustache, says, in his Esthonian fashion, "The Ke-iser will be-e much beholden to me when I tell him about you." Your letters, my sweetheart, are not lost, but they take three or four days in coming; I have made a complaint about it. I have now had news almost daily, my obedient angel; only after the 2d you did not write for three days. . . . I write from the Chamber, after having received to-day (Wednesday) your consoling epistle of Saturday. Once more, my sweetheart, we thank the faithful and merciful Lord on our knees for having left us our dear ones, and rely hereafter on His gracious protection. Hearty greetings to pa and ma.

Your most faithful

v. B.

(Postmarked BERLIN, *January 20, '51.*)

MY SWEETHEART,—It is quite impossible that you have not had a letter from me for four days; three are the very most I have omitted, and that but once. For the rest, you can gather from this how I felt when I read of scarlet-fever, and then nothing for four days. I have this long time been complaining about the mails, but it is of no use. Last night I was with the Stolbergs; she is very kind, but not well, and wants to be remembered to you. I am much obliged to mammy for her kind letter. Hans laughs at me when I tell him he should write to you; he thinks a letter from me every Sunday is quite sufficient. . . .

Farewell. God's mercy will be with you and the children, and will again give you strength; of that I am confident, or I should be good for nothing here. I thank you for having always honestly informed me how the children are;



BILL

MARIE  
VON BISMARCK

HERBERT



do the same hereafter, but each of your letters, except the two last, awoke and kept alive in me the idea that while I read it (three days pass, you know), our little boy was perhaps no longer alive; the same with to-day's letter. So there is not much pleasure in "sociability." I have not yet seen Melissa. I will attend to the collars. I have not yet had time for Keudell. God protect you, my angel, and help you to bear His trials. Your most faithful v. B.

Take *great* care—*more* than seems necessary—of the children; particularly shield them from cold.

BERLIN, *January 22, '51.*

MY POOR SWEETHEART,—You have so much anxiety and care to endure! But your letter has reassured me. Marie's attack of quinsy seems to me like a familiar friend, when I compare it with scarlet-fever, and by God's grace the latter appears in Bub's case, too, to be past the critical stage, for which I thank the Lord with my whole soul. I cannot understand why you received no news for five days; I failed to write for only three days, and that with the knowledge that the *Neu Presse* would inform you of my doing one and another thing in the Chamber, and consequently that I was alive and well. I am extremely sorry that your anxieties should have been increased by this break in the correspondence; it may easily happen, for that matter, that one letter travels faster than the following one, but of course I am never seriously ill, so there is no ground for anxiety about me. To be sure, I have to dine and sup daily, but I hope you do the same. Mammy, to whom many thanks for her letter, cannot refrain from exclaiming at the contrast between your life and mine; let her reflect

whether she would not a thousand times rather have been with you if she had known you were at a distance *and* ill. When those we love are in danger, taking care of them is the more toilsome part, but it is harder, much harder, at least for me, at such times to have to go without the consolation of being with them and of seeing them about me, and to have to say to myself that if the children die to-day, Wednesday, I shall not know it before Saturday. One experiences in fancy every day all that in fact can happen only once. . . . And now, listen!

I don't want to scold you, but I most explicitly demand of you, according to the obedience which by the word of God you owe me, that for at least six hours out of every twenty-four, counting from midnight to midnight, you shall be in bed and asleep, or, at least, honestly try to sleep, no matter what happens. If you don't want me to doubt your love, you will follow these instructions; it is necessary and rational to do so, if you don't want death to take you from me.

Farewell, my dearly beloved sweetheart; thank every one, and particularly our dear mother, once more, for their faithfulness in this trying time; may God's mercy preserve you and keep you well, as I am firmly convinced He will help the children to recover.

Your most faithful

V. B.

BERLIN, *January 23, '51.*

. . . Last night, to mommy's sorrow be it said, I was at three parties, two of them for political intrigue, and the last for recreation at Malle's, where I again saw Theresa Rabe, *née* Schenk, arriving after eleven and staying till one, drinking tea and chatting about dancing-lessons and old

times. How one does get old!—that is twenty years ago now, and if at that time any one had considered me as not grown up I should have thought it an insult. You were then four years old; how wonderfully has God led me since then! I now hope and believe that He will not again let me go. Dearest love to mother and father. When opportunity offers I will get hold of the little Sauer boy\* of the Wilhelmstrasse, and take him to the opera—yes, to the Italiana. Only I hardly have time for it. God protect you.

Your most faithful, loving V. B.

BERLIN, *January 25.*

MY DEAR,— . . . Yesterday I did not receive your letter until the afternoon; finally, after a tussle from eight to one with the Jews of the shipping department, I had two hours in which to take a walk, and wandered through every nook and corner of the Thiergarten, in memory of school-times and our joint promenades and resting-places on the benches by the quiet water. It did me real good to hear the rustling of the trees once more; now I want to take a brisk walk for at least an hour every day; this eternal indoor and salon atmosphere oppresses me and makes me dizzy. I have to think much of the poor Tienchens; the affair with Albert is truly very sad; we ourselves know what it means to bring a child safely through the reefs of the first years, followed by stormy youth, and, after having overcome all that, to see him struck down in early manhood is something terribly hard for a mother to live to see. But may God help them well through, and restore Albert to health! He has helped us with our children hitherto, and how poor my standing with Him compared with that of Aunt U.† If it

\* Son of Mr. Sauer, the pastor at Old-Kolziglow.

† Ulrike—i. e., Frau von Below-Reddentin, née von Puttkamer.



were not for those nuisances of reports on banking and shipping affairs, I should now be with you; the happy few who have escaped every committee appointment are all hurrying home, while I am daily detained, like a bad school-boy. May God preserve our beloved mother. When she says, "You will understand it when I am dead," we tease her about it; but it is a serious truth; and when her feebleness suggests the thought that she may leave us, I feel in earnest how many thanks, how many apologies, and how much love I owe her; but the latter I not only owe—she has it. Tell her that from me; even though, between two sensitive hearts, the love may be covered over at times, it is covered only externally and temporarily, and I earnestly long to see her kind, large eyes resting searchingly on my face and my "sick hand." . . . God's protection be with you. Hearty love to our dear parents.

Your most faithful

V. B.

BERLIN, *January 29, '51.*

MY HEART'S NAN,—Your answer to "Observer," laconic, dateless, and unsigned, was to-day received at Hans's, and from it I judge that at least at the time of its despatch everything, by God's grace, was in order.

*Evening.*—I have just returned, with Hans, from old Excellency Massow, and both of us are using my hunting-knife to do justice to the fine sausage that came in the package of socks. Many thanks for everything; it tastes very well, although for the moment we have no bread for it. . . . To-day I failed to find Busch, to speak with him about bathing the children. I am afraid of it, and I don't altogether trust Thiele;\* dirt is always better than disease.

\* Physician near Reinfeld.

If I find Busch to-morrow, I will at once write you what he says. Take great care that the urchins don't catch cold, otherwise some after-trouble is so easily left, and please do not deprive yourself of sleep; if you can't do so at night, sleep during the day, going regularly to bed; do me this kindness, otherwise you will not bear up under it, and when the tension of anxiety relaxes you will collapse, and everything will follow which you don't suspect now. When will the time come when God will permit us to dwell continually under the same roof? Certainly things can't always go on this way; but as long as the children are not well there is no help for it, and God's will be done, even if we have to put our hands into our purses and move again to the extension of Dorotheenstrasse. Despite all night noises, I have still a fond recollection of the ground floor in Behrenstrasse, and I always look in sorrowfully whenever I pass by. Have you received from your adorer Sigismund\* a package containing some fine liqueurs? The heartiest love to our parents and all kind friends. May the Lord graciously protect you and the children.

Your most faithful

v. B.

BERLIN, *January 30, '51.*

I am writing you in haste at Malle's, my angel, to say that at last I have spoken to G. Simon. He told me that he bathes those affected with scarlet-fever only after the scaling has ceased—that is, in the sixth week. He does not believe that, sooner, it would be positively harmful; some even use cold baths from the beginning in cases of scarlet-fever (but not for *my* children); he says that bathing is

\* Baron Arnim.

beneficial when the skin is dry and hard, but quite superfluous when it is soft and in perspiration; and that washing will do just as well. In washing (with warm water), each limb is washed separately, while the rest remain covered, and is then dried and dressed, to be followed by another. If a bath is given, it should not be too warm, only tepid, a few (three to four) minutes, and then rubbed with a woollen cloth. If the skin is not *very* hard and dry, Simon considers bathing as at least superfluous. Your nice little letter and mother's fell out of my stockings to-day. I am well. God be with you and the children.

Your most faithful

V. B.

BERLIN, *February 3, '51.*

Still, my darling, the knick-knacks have not been despatched, but I have all that I wanted to buy, only Malle is still in arrears with collars and toys; she must dance every evening and go horseback-riding in the morning, and then she is so tired that she can't stir. Certainly I can't buy mull collars myself. To-day and yesterday I have had no letter from you; I hope the little chap is well, but I am no longer anxious about little Mollie; God's arm will not be too short to be helpful to both. I am well; so is Hans. We devoured the sausage at bedtime, without bread, in three slices; the small end was not so good as the fat one, but the impression left by the whole was quite favorable. The pens I have are too abominable; this is the sixth that I am throwing away, and no knife; I must close, and be on the watch over ministerial responsibility; Hans talks as loud as a trumpet. God's gracious protection be with you and all the loved ones.

Your most faithful

V. B.

BERLIN, *February 6, '51.*

MY HEART'S NANNIE,— I am alive and well, and love you, and will write you soon a very long letter, in which there will be nothing but love. Ever since I awoke I have sat here quarrelling with Bloch the Jew; it is now one o'clock, and I utilize the opportune appearance of Kunze, the bootblack, to give him these two lines for you; at two I am going out for a walk, then dinner; then committees, and many people to be seen, diplomatists, babblers, deputies, and then tea, and to bed. So it goes day by day; once I am out I do not get home again, and still I never finish what I have on hand for the day. Just now the man has given me your note. How anxious you are on Monday, and God has already helped on Tuesday! It is quite impossible that the children should be well so soon; the sickness always lasts six weeks in scarlet-fever. God will not forsake us, as He has helped us thus far; only be *glad* in your trust in Him, my darling; He has graciously turned aside the great dangers; He will also help us over the small ones. Why does that donkey want to use iodine on the boy? Don't allow that, rather let Scheunemann come; he doesn't drink; iodine is quite poisonous. God protect you all, and particularly you, the dearest treasure I have.

Your most faithful

V. B.

BERLIN, *February 10, '51.*

I have just received your letter of the 7th, my angel, which, in fact, came here yesterday, because the mail now travels twenty-four hours faster, owing to my complaint. My first feeling is one of very humble thanks to the Lord that all is well with you. Our little one seems to be at once in mischief, telling you we are going to stay here until June.

How can she make you believe such unpleasant foolishness? I hope we shall be through before April, if we are not dissolved still sooner. I have spoken to Simon again about our youngster; he says the gland swellings are entirely without danger, and that nothing should be done except to poultice them when they are ready to burst; therefore, let the infamous iodine alone, otherwise the boy will suffer the after-effects for years, in his teeth and elsewhere. Even if the glands become hardened, that will pass off without the aid of medicine. Did I say that the Countess Görz was nicer than your dear *rosa unica*? If so, I probably said too much: I can only say I like her, and I wish you could make her acquaintance. Do not be afraid that, after the din which prevails here, solitude will weigh heavily on me; certainly never, in company with you and the children and parents; but absolute solitude is just what I often long for, after a whole day's wild chase among dry, dull documents and superficial chatter; I am only comfortable when I get to bed at night, smoke, and read, and then turn round to implore God to take you in Reinfeld under His protection. There is a fancy that follows me in all my work—to lie with my head in your lap, in a quite solitary, deep mountain ravine, in the warm summer-time, close to the brook, to contemplate the blue sky above me through the smoke of my cigar and the tops of the beech-trees, and to be looked at and petted by you, and for a long, long while to be quite idle. When is that coming to pass? In the Selke Valley, or where? The session at which I write this is adjourned, and I am going home again, to read and copy from books which contain nothing but piles of figures. Farewell. God keep you. and let the iodine alone.

Your most faithful and very dear

v. B.

BERLIN, Tuesday Morning.

(Postmarked *February 18, '51.*)

MY WELL-BELOVED, — . . . On Sunday we attended the Lutheran Church. Hans was not altogether satisfied with the sermon ; then we went to Lasius, but the ladies all stayed in Brandenburg ; then to Dutke,\* 139,† and we each gave him one rix-dollar with which to attend concerts with E. Kumme ; besides, I told them that I shall be at their disposal when that is all gone, or when he needs anything else. He cannot go with me, however, as I have no time, and for two first-class tickets he can go four times. The boy was quite well and very happy ; they seem to be good people there, even the waiter, who praised Dut as a sober, saving boy who takes good care of his money. How small the garden is that used to be my whole world ! and I can't understand what has become of the *spaces* through which I so often ran breathlessly, and my little garden with water-cresses and Turkish wheat, and all the places where I built my now-fallen air-castles, and the bluish vapor of the hills which then lay on the other side of the board fence. The trees were old acquaintances. I still remember their various kinds of fruit. And there, too, were the chickens which, every time I looked at them, made me homesick for Kniephof ; and then I used to make note of every hour, or quarter of an hour, that must elapse before vacation and the Stettin mail-coach. How I longed, then, to go out into life and the world. As I stood in the garden the whole parti-colored earth arose before my eyes as I then imagined it, with its woods and castles and all the adventures that awaited me in it, and I could have wept if prosaic Hans had not called and importuned me, and made me remember the fact which

\*Son of Pastor Sauer. See p. 203, note.

† Wilhelmstrasse, previously Plamann.



I now know very well that the garden is a small spot in the Wilhelmstrasse, with nothing particular roundabout or behind the fences, and that the Rabbit Heath, where we played on Sundays, is a poor, stupid pine-wood; that the "Dornberg" in Kniephof is sixteen acres in size, and that we had business with General Gerlach. I could sit for hours in the garden and dream; when you come here again you must go to it with me. Let us humbly thank God that the children are getting on so much better, and that He does not punish us through them for our sins. On Sunday I am to receive Communion, with Hans, at Knaak's. Hearty greetings to the dear folks, and God's blessing upon you, my angel.

Your most faithful                      V. B.

G. Simon is of opinion that iodine will not do any harm, and that it is the best remedy for swollen glands; he ought to know more than we do about it; but don't use too much of it.

BERLIN, *February 28, '51.*

You know, my sweetheart, variety is the spice of life, therefore I am now writing to you with the red legislative ink which is used for correcting speeches and reports. It is your favorite color, anyway, even if it is not the exact shade. Despite all legislative cares, I am very bright since I know that you are again in a fair way with the babies. So true is it that God must do with us as that general of a convict battalion did with his men—he had them whipped every other day, because they then enjoyed the free days so much. We are too apt to become ungrateful for all His benefits unless we are reminded of the possibility of loss. I am very glad that we both received the Lord's Supper at the same time; I trust our little Sauer has touched



the depths of your heart, just as Knaak did mine; I was almost hopeless and helpless when it came to the point, and wanted to leave the church because I did not consider myself worthy to join in the ceremony, but in the final prayer from the altar God gave me leave and a summons, too, and afterwards I was very happy. It had a good influence also on Hans; he is outwardly much nicer since—much more human. I have no antipathy to him; at least, it does not come out, even if I sometimes (though seldom) am angered at his disposition, so out of harmony with mine—he is too good for me. . . . To-day I was invited out to Gross-Kreutz, but I am voting quietly here in the Chamber. God keep you, my beloved sweetheart. Love to our parents and Melissa, and kiss the children for me.

Your most faithful

V. B.

BERLIN, *March 3, '51.*

I have just read your letter to Hans, my darling, and I am sorry for your poor eyes; that is due to too much night-watching. May God have mercy on you, my poor dear, that you may not suffer always; during your whole life you have never enjoyed the feeling of being entirely well and free from pain; certainly it will be put down to your credit some time in the next life, otherwise you would come poorly off compared with me. I suppose *my* eyes will then be sore, since I am now so entirely well that I do not even suffer from heartburn any more. But how can my little good-for-nothing believe that I took no notice at all of the craving for photos? Hans has even less time than I; I bothered your rose Elizabeth about it several times, but she refused point-blank, saying she had had her picture taken once and is too vain to do so again, and that she

has become as ugly as "a Pavian." But she has a pretty fair portrait in oil which she will send for and have photographed for you. Now you must apologize to me for what you wrote to Hans about me. . . . Who told you that I was passionately fond of dancing? Don't trust the person who said so, for it was not said in a kindly spirit, and it is a falsehood, besides. . . . I earnestly hope we shall be through *before* May. Before that time I shall probably run over on leave once to my dear one. But if the prospect regarding the criminal law changes again, and the session bids fair to last till the end of May or June, then you will have to come here, anyway, my angel; there are days when it seems as though I could not bear my homesickness for you and the babies, and feel like resigning my commission and hurrying home. Then Hans scolds me, and I represent to him that his meeting again with Butzke and Schneider will certainly not be very pleasant. For the rest, little Hans has lately thawed out, more particularly since we attended Holy Communion. Now I must again be on the alert. Farewell, my sweetheart. God's blessing be with you.

Your most faithful  
v. B.

BERLIN, *March 5, '51.*

MY DARLING,— . . . On my advice Hans gave your letter to Eberhard's wife (with whom I have been on familiar terms for some time), and yesterday at the palace he received the photo in exchange for it, and I reproached her most severely for not having given it to me, and, to console me, she executed a quadrille with me. The King took occasion to call to me as I was standing before him, and said, "The Queen has been making sheep's-eyes at you for half an hour, and you don't know it." The beloved mother

of my country (an expression which, I regret to say, always calls up to me a robust woman who feeds children with bread and butter) spoke to me quite graciously and kindly; she remarked that I had said I danced only for my health, and she thought that was pretence, whereupon I explained to her what a miserable life I had led during the day. The conversation was not at all flattering to the Duchess Agnes of Dessau, my partner at my side; *but I could not help it*. At supper I sat next to Don Carlos Savigny, who always speaks of you very lovingly, even when I am not at hand, and who sends you cordial remembrances. Frau von Usedom told me that he had called you *a very clever and sensible woman*. You see that my jealousy of Carlos is exceeded by my honesty. I drank lots of cold champagne at his Majesty's, drove there with Malle, and smoked, read the newspapers, then read the 118th Psalm with Hans, and slept very soundly. For Malle's sake I am very glad that Shrovetide will end the season of grand balls; she devotes herself to them too passionately, and physical and mental exhaustion will come after. . . . Every time I take up my pen I purpose writing to our dear parents, but it always turns into a letter to you; as the apex of the Reinfeld triangle pointing in my direction, you may always inform the two other dear corners of the triangle that I love both of them very much, and implore God's blessing on them. My idea is so to arrange the leave of absence which I purpose taking as to be able to spend my birthday with you, my sweetheart. But I shall hardly be able to get away for more than a week; already Hans is raising a hue and cry about my frivolous plans; however, I shall ask no one, but disappear utterly at the end of this month, for, my sweetheart, I must see, hear, and feel you, and all of you, once again. . . . Farewell, my most beloved angel. I trust in the

THE LOVE LETTERS OF BISMARCK [MAR.

Lord's mercy that He will continue to take you and all of us into His gracious protection.

Your most faithful

V. B.

BERLIN, *March 6, '51.*

I write you only two lines, my sweetheart, to thank you that you and the children are well, and to scold you for having vowed to send me no more commissions. I *demand* one with your next letter. Who else should execute them? Julie Behr! She may attend to the tulle and gauze, for aught I care, but if you don't send me a commission with your next letter you do not love me. But I want to find fault, nevertheless, and be pitied, after I have executed them. What would you say if some time you should jokingly complain of too much knitting, and I should therefore refuse to wear any more stockings of your making? Take counsel with yourself and apologize to me. . . . Love to all, and farewell, under God's protection, my angel.

Your most faithful

V. B.

BERLIN, *March 12, '51.*

MY DARLING,— . . . The burned-out First Chamber meets to-day in our hall. The fire day before yesterday made a very good show; particularly the churches in the Gendarmenmarkt, Werder's, and the theatre were illuminated as if by magic. Berliners were full of humor: here Vincke's foundations of law are burning; there Bismarck's youthful fancies go up in smoke (the common folk do not distinguish between the two Houses); "burning questions," "Who would have thought that old thing had so much fire in it?" and "At last there's a light dawning on her," etc., interspersed by rows with the constables and whistling.

I was just dining with Budberg when a servant announced that the *Second* Chamber was on fire ; to my shame I must say that my first feeling was one of egoistic pleasure that I should not need to write a long report in the evening and read it next morning at nine ; with a frivolous glass of very cold champagne I consoled myself for the misfortune, the whole extent of which (100,000 rix-dollars) I began to realize only when, after all, I had to sit down reluctantly at the inkstand, write until far into the night, and then, at half past eight yesterday, hurry here to the torture-chamber, which I left only at half past five—that is to say, nine hours later—because, after the sitting, I had to spend an hour and a half correcting a wretchedly reported speech on the military budget, which you will read in to-day's *Kreuzzeitung*. . . . These Stolbergs are all very nice people, and yesterday "my Eberhard" suddenly delivered a long and *very good* speech in the House anent the army. To-day I am dining with the Stolbergs and the Fritzes and the old Carlsburgers, who have been here (at Oscar's) for several days. Poor Fritz has grown very quiet. I think that the confusion of his political ideas, due to his poorly digested university lectures and to his friend Oriolla, is to blame for his colder relations to his comrades and to other people. They all speak of him with esteem and commiseration. His mother, too, has some leanings towards Liberalism, which are nourished by association with crack-brained men of learning ; but, nevertheless, I like her very much. . . . I still want to go to Schönhausen this month, to arrange for the payment of the capital, and then by the 1st I hope to be with my angel, unless there are extremely important matters on hand here. Good-bye, my dear sweetheart. May the Lord grant my prayers for you and the children.

Your most faithful  
V. B.

BERLIN, *March 17, '51.*

Yesterday, my love, I received two letters from you, enclosing one for the Countess Stolberg, and to-day, to my joy, I find one again, and for your diligence I praise you very much and thank you. It makes me all the more ashamed because for three days now I have not written to you, and this time not owing to immersion in business, but from sheer laziness. Since Friday evening I have been pretty well through with my committee labors, and felt so well over it on Saturday that I cut the meeting which I should have attended, loafed all morning in my dressing-gown, reading and smoking, and then went out riding with Oscar for three hours in the delightful spring weather. The sun shone quite warm; already there are shoots on the willows, the saucy honeysuckle leaves are coming out as large as groschen, and we rode so hard that both legs still ache from it; then I lay for a very long time in a warm bath, ate well and heartily at the inn, smoked, went to the theatre, and finished up with beer at Schwarz's—on the whole, a very well-spent day. . . . The Stolbergs have left for Silesia, and will remain there ten days; I am sending your letter after them; but, out of regard for my Philistine disposition, you must be good enough to write the address in bald prose, otherwise I cannot put such a letter in the mail; right across through "your Elizabeth" I wrote a new address in broomstick characters; love her very much inside, and be cold and courteous on the envelope; so the custom of the world demands. I think that, after all, I shall have to go to Schönhausen on April 1st, because there will be many expenses if I am not there myself, and perhaps I shall have to go, anyway, if the grant to the hospital means further extensions. Then I will so arrange as to be in Reinfeld with my dear little one on the



11th. But I want to make you lots of presents with my saved-up pay, if mammy would only write what. Tulle or mull? I have already secured Eichendorf. Do you know that the man is still alive? He lives here in the Cadet Corps with his son-in-law, who is an instructor or an officer there. Don't let the fact that he is a Privy-Councillor be any check to your enthusiasm. Now, good-bye, my angel. Love to parents and cousins. God watch over you.

Your most faithful

V. B.

BERLIN, *March 25, '51.*

MY DEAREST,—In this most beautiful spring weather I am sitting here in the hazy atmosphere of the House, wrangling over the discipline of officials. During the last few days I have taken fine long walks, and arrived home dead tired and sweating like a horse. In the Thiergarten the flower-beds have already been laid out, and appear red, white, and blue through the trees, and the alders, honeysuckles, and other pretty forward things have long leaves, the lawn is green as in summer, and the air like a tepid bath. I should like to amble about all day on horseback. I thought that I should be quit of society after the carnival, and be able to make evening calls at my pleasure, but now one little reception is following another. . . . I think I shall have to give up the position of dike captain, otherwise I shall have to inspect the Schönhausen dikes again early in May. The sending of money to Schönhausen is a very wearisome matter to me; I have to pay on the 31st—the 30th is a Sunday, when I don't like to travel—and if I arrive as early as Saturday I sha'n't be able to endure listening to the complaints and praises of the aldermen and Bellin for three days; and the road from Genthin on a mail-coach



or a farmer's wagon will kill me; but I am afraid that unless I go there in person the business will fall into confusion. By the time my birthday comes around I should at least like to be here with Malvina, and not with the Aldermen. Now, in the first place, I am going out for a walk, to think it over, and see how I can overcome my aversion to Schönhausen. I have delivered the letter to Busch. I think this fine weather will certainly benefit our little youngster. Take courage, my sweetheart; the Lord will not deprive us of His protection. Good-bye, and remember me most lovingly to our dear parents.

Your most faithful

V. B.

BERLIN, *March 29, '51.*

MY BELOVED NANNIE, — This invigorating spring weather makes me hate ink so that I have not written you for three days. I am now rid of all my committees, and have a very vivid impression of the times when school was out and I could run about in the Thiergarten. I stroll for hours as far as the water near the house on the Charlottenburg Causeway, and, besides, I go out riding daily with Oscar, so that all my limbs are lame from the unaccustomed exertion. Yesterday, while riding, a very refreshing spring rain wet me pretty thoroughly. I almost envy Oscar his horses; the other day, for twelve hundred rix-dollars, he bought two road-horses and a very nice English mare, whose gait is remarkably fast and steady. Now I am not going to Schönhausen at all, but have settled the matter by correspondence. Monday was the only day that suited the man, and on that day a vote is to be taken here from which I cannot be absent. Once recently we stood one hundred and thirty-four against one hundred and thirty-

three, and the other time one hundred and thirty-four to one hundred and thirty-four. The books which you want from Schönhausen I shall have sent; only write me the name of the author of the history of England, for there are several of them in the library; Melissa will probably recollect his name. I shall now spend my birthday quietly here, and on that occasion, between four and five o'clock, I shall drink a glass of champagne to your health. . . . Hans has been to Halle and Naumburg, visiting Leo and his nephews and other friends, and has returned quite cheerful; he intended to stay away two days, and for five nights he was not in his bed. Much as he tyrannizes over me, I worried about him, and I had search made for him through the *Observer*, whereupon he came at once. It is already said here that he is going to make a very wealthy match, but I don't believe it; he is as closely shut up concerning his own person and his inner life as if we had known each other only three days. The girl is sensible, pretty, amiable, and pious, and, withal, a great heiress and of good family; I should be glad to see him win her, if only the parents are of the same opinion as I am. The other day I was again sounded as to Schönhausen through the medium of the Carlsburgers, who did not, however, wish to say for whom, if I would not take the matter up. Much to their delight, I said no. May God direct my conscience otherwise, if it was wrong; it seemed to me almost atrocious, but perhaps owing only to considerations which have no validity before God. How about our summer country-place and the dike captaincy? The idea of travelling alone to Schönhausen, living three days with the aldermanic people, and listening to Frick's complaints and Bellin's boastful chatter seemed to me terrible, and I am almost grateful to the Chamber for keeping me from it, if I

can only know first that Bellin has attended to everything without confusion. I wish it were possible for the dear old folks to live with us at Schönhausen, but it is impossible to expect that of father. Greet them a thousand-fold and fondle them for me with great love. I want to bring along for your birthday all sorts of pretty things, but unless you write me more fully what you desire I shall be growling all the time I am there; I have made large savings from allowances, and shall be very generous. Theodore is still sick in bed, but is now improving. Good-bye, my sweet angel. Take good care of yourself, so as to keep well. Has Busch not yet answered about the boy? I shall have a talk with him before I leave, and bring along his wisdom with me. I am going to see the Versines again to-day. A great many people send regards to you; Manteuffel's wife is always exceedingly solicitous about you and our babies. Good-bye, my sweetheart. Your most faithful V. B.

BERLIN, *March 31, '51.*

MY DEAR,— . . . As to-morrow is my birthday, I am to be *fêted* by the Arnims, Stolbergs, Hans, and others; we shall not begin dinner till 4.30, on account of the Chamber; therefore you will most likely be drinking my health before I drink yours, which will probably not be before six o'clock. Much love to our parents. Just think, Andrae has heard that I tyrannized over you by letter, urging you to nurse the children and watch over them beyond your strength. How people will chatter!

Your most faithful

V. B.

BERLIN, *April 3, '51.*

I could not write to you on my birthday, my angel, although my first thought in the morning, after my thanks

to God for all His blessings during the past year, was with you, and my dearest prayer was for yourself and the children. In the morning I was awakened by Andrae, who had been with Hans; then Malle called, brought me a very useful pair of slippers and a cravat (from you or mammy?), and burnt almonds; then came Knaak, whose congratulations were very cordial and kind; then I had to yawn from ten to four in the Chamber, and for dinner Röder and Stolberg had arranged a Luculline feast, which appeared to me to be terribly expensive. I was the guest of the company, consisting of Oscar, Malle, the Stolbergs, Hans, Röder, Prillwitz, Münchhausen (the new magistrate for the first Jerichow district), and Andrae, the latter being also a guest. We caroused until eight, and spent the evening with the Stolbergs. Yesterday I still felt quite fatigued owing to this copious dinner, took a bath, then rode sharply for three hours with Malle, a Fräulein von Veltheim from our neighborhood near Magdeburg, and several gentlemen. After all this I was sleepy in the evening, and I am now writing you that I am well, love you very much, and still hope to be with you by the 11th. . . . Farewell, my sweetheart.

Your most faithful                      v. B.

BERLIN, *April 7, '51.*

Your poor birthday, my angel; here it is already the 7th, and the matter of the many millions, for which all sick people and those on furlough have been summoned, will not come up to-day, either, nor will it be finished to-morrow; on the other hand, it is increasingly probable that we shall close before Easter. I have just tried hard to persuade Manteuffel, and he is favorably inclined. So we

shall either finish just before Easter, or else adjourn at Easter for ten or twelve days, so that, in any event, I shall at least spend the holidays with you; in the former case remaining with you, and, I hope, also in the latter, for I can no longer endure this tedious business. My only amusement is walking. The Thiergarten is charming, and because it is always raining a little (so that I have to splash through the mud in heavy boots), there is not another living soul there, a fact which I find quite agreeable, once I am out of the city gate without meeting an acquaintance who seizes my arm. The leaves of the alders are like four-groschen pieces; gooseberries, spiræa, even the horn-beams glisten green through the woods, the latter, of course, still very light-colored. Day before yesterday I heard the Hungarian musicians, with Malle; their ordinary music has more movement than melody, but the Hungarian national airs which they played were quite the contrary, songs without words by Lenau; sickly as the howling of wolves on an autumn night; I will see whether I can get the notes, but they will not be so pretty for the piano, for everything flows together as in a bagpipe. Yesterday Hans and I were at General Gerlach's; besides ourselves and Höppner, there was nothing but Gerlachs, young and old, male and female. Yesterday morning, at your command, I was again with Knaak; he takes too high a strain for me; he not only considers all dancing as sinful, but also any attendance at theatres and any music which ministers not to the "Glory of God" but simply to pleasure; he thinks of all this as denial of God—as Peter says, "I know not the man." This is going too far for me—fanaticism. But I am fond of him personally, nor do I really think evil of him, and even though I do not share his point of view, I wish there were more such fanatics. I long very much for

you, the more spring advances, and I am always tired and yawning here, except when I go out to walk or ride; I wish I could be out-doors all the time. The amaranth emblem was put in by Hans; I only wrote his name on it so that you should not suppose it was from me. For the rest, he has been for some weeks much brighter and more sociable, although I do not believe he had serious thoughts of love and marriage. He thinks that he would like very much to make Fräulein von Ranzau, of Bethany, his wife. Wagener is to return to-day from Ziebingen. Just imagine what nonsense! They wanted to make me Chamberlain (*i.e.*, in title); I opposed it, as I don't attach any value to it, and it costs money, and a very expensive uniform, too. But say nothing about it, for I think it will not be agreeable to the King to learn that I was not willing; he considers it a grand thing for any one to become Chamberlain. Good-bye, my sweetheart. God protect you and our parents and the babies and all. Your most faithful V. B.

If I do not come home by the 11th, we will celebrate both our birthdays on my arrival. I have already a very pretty little dress for you, and keepsakes and nice things besides. Your very tired HUSBAND.

BERLIN, *April 10, '51.*

I write you in great anger, my dear, because they have just, by adjournment, choked off a long and carefully prepared speech, with all possible new material which I had collected with much trouble, so that all my bother was in vain, and I must content myself with voting. Despite all the bitterness, which is hardly kept in check by thoughts of you and all I love, because it came about through the stupidity and cowardice of our "friends," I must, never-



theless, send you love and best wishes for to-morrow; and even if this letter does not arrive till day after to-morrow, still be assured that I shall think of you very lovingly, and ask God's blessing on you more earnestly than ever. Whatever presents I have for you I shall bring with me. . . . If I finish my packing and other business Saturday, I will leave on Sunday (God will pardon me, I think), and if not, early Monday. It is possible I may have to return here after Easter, and on May 10th the Chamber is to close. May it go to the ——!

Good-bye, for to-day, my sweetheart. Soon after this letter you will have me, too.

Your most faithful

V. B.

BERLIN, Friday, 8 A. M.  
(Postmarked *April 25, '51.*)

You will sympathize with me, my sweetheart, when you see that at this hour I am already in the committee, having risen at seven, and Vincke opposite me, whom I never saw before at this time of day. Late last night I was still at "Fra Diavolo"; they really intend to use me in some diplomatic capacity; but in my opinion I cannot *at once* accept an entirely independent post, because I should make myself ridiculous through ignorance of the usual documentary forms, which I have no inclination to do. Besides, I wish a position on which I can count for some time, so that I can settle down with you, my angel; otherwise our separation will be prolonged indefinitely; it is possible that these wishes of mine will make the matter come to naught, which, on the other hand, I should regret, as the mere nomination of myself and Hans to any positions whatever would be a public pledge that the government has really cut loose altogether from the Revolution. But I



should immediately give up any position in which I cannot live with my family. It is certainly a source of pleasure to me that the King has made himself familiar with the idea of my appointment, less for my own sake than for the cause which we support, for if I let that yoke be put upon me I must give up for a long time to come every habit of comfort, as well as the hope of living as quietly with you and the children as during our first winter. God will certainly arrange it according to His will and for our souls' good, and in this frame of mind we will await developments; I have not expressed any selfish desire, and am not pushing myself forward. As soon as anything definite is decided I shall write you. The Chamber will certainly be adjourned before the 10th, perhaps by the 3d, so that we shall soon be in each other's arms, and can talk over everything. Yesterday afternoon I was in the Thiergarten; there everything is already shady and thickly foliated, except that the oaks have as yet only tiny thin leaves, and the beeches, limes, and chestnut-trees already afford protection against rain, the clumps are impenetrably green, the fruit trees are in full blossom, and all sorts of pretty shrubs, red-thorns, blooming currants, and much besides are blossoming in full richness of color; the grape-like buds of the horse-chestnut are just about to burst. It was delightful out in the green, only too many people, but that did not prevent the nightingales from screaming as if they were quite alone at Schönhausen. . . . Is father entirely well again? Much love to him and M., and farewell.

Your most faithful

V. B.

BERLIN, *April 28, '51.*

MY DEAR SWEETHEART,—Mother's premonition that I would remain long away has, unfortunately, proved cor-

rect this time. . . . The King was the first to propose my nomination, and that at once, as a real delegate to the Diet; his plan has, of course, encountered much opposition, and has finally been so modified that Rochow will, it is true, remain Minister at Petersburg, whither he is to return in two months, but meanwhile, provisionally, he is commissioned to Frankfort, and I am to accompany him, with the assurance that, on his leaving for Petersburg, I shall be his successor. But this last is between ourselves. Now I want to go, first of all, to Frankfort, and take a look at the situation, and hear how I shall stand pecuniarily pending my definite appointment, of which I know nothing at all as yet. Then I shall see whether I can leave again shortly after the start, and whether I am to count on staying any longer; for, although I have, indeed, accepted, still I am not yet sufficiently familiar with the ground to be able to say definitely whether I shall stay there or shortly get out again. As soon as that is decided, we shall probably, after all, have to consider for you, too, the prospect of exchanging your quiet Reinfeld existence for the noise of the Diet's diplomacy. You folks have often complained that nothing was made of me by those above me; now this is, beyond my expectations and wishes, a sudden appointment to what is at this moment the most important post in our diplomatic service; I have not sought it; I must assume that the Lord wished it, and I cannot withdraw, although I foresee that it will be an unfruitful and a thorny office, in which, with the best intentions, I shall forfeit the good opinion of many people. But it would be cowardly to decline. I cannot give you to-day further particulars as to our plans, how we shall meet, what will be done about your going to the sea-shore; only I shall try to make leisure, if possible, to see you before.

I feel almost like crying when I think of this sudden upsetting of our innocent plans, as well as of the uncertainty when I shall see you again, my beloved heart, and the babies; and I earnestly pray God to arrange it all without detriment to our earthly welfare and without harm to my soul. God be with you, my dear, and bring us together again soon. With heartfelt love,

Your most faithful

V. B.

(Postmarked BERLIN, *May 1, '51.*)

I have just received your little letter of the 29th, my beloved heart; its tenor is quite as melancholy as are my feelings when I think of Reinfeld and of our quiet plans for the summer; I feel as though we ought to emigrate to America, taking leave of all our dear old ways; for who knows when the wheel which is now catching us up will let us go again, so that we may once more spend a quiet summer in the country? But then, too, it may be sooner than we suppose, for who can foretell the ways of the Lord even for a moment? But how can you believe that we should be parted until Christmas? I do not yet know to-day how I shall be fixed pecuniarily; if so that we cannot live together on my income I shall not remain in Frankfort; but if it is amply sufficient, we will probably *both* remove there, with the children and the maid-servants; if that could not be done, I could not undertake the post; if these separations on account of the Chamber were also to extend over all the intervals, that would end the whole business; I shall not do that, come what may; God has not brought us together for that. Only I am sorry for our poor, dear parents, that our charming circle is to be broken up, and that they are to be left in solitude, but in the human and Divine order nothing

else is feasible; I have not brought about the situation for myself; I have not contributed to it by a desire or by a single word; that is a consolation to me. . . .

It seems as though sickness came among you the moment I am away; the first advices I receive here are invariably disquieting; I trust that the dear little ones' health has now been restored by this fine weather. You should all be very careful not to ruin digestion, and please insist with iron severity on regularity in meals, and that the children do not eat "for pleasure," but for health; for the former they are as yet too small and weak. How delightful the spring is! unfortunately I can go out but little; all is blooming and green; the chestnut-trees are now charmingly full of white flowers; it would have made me so glad to experience all that once more in Reinfeld next week! Have the storks arrived yet? . . . Hearty love to the dear parents and children. God protect and bless all of you in the little red house.

Your most faithful

V. B.

BERLIN, *May 3, '51.*

MY SWEETEST, DEAREST HEART,—Why so sad? for it is pleasant in the foreign country, but I can hardly restrain my tears when I think of the quiet country-life with you, and all that goes with it, which will probably for some time to come hover about me in a distant region of dreams, and which just now appears to be more charming than ever. Why do you talk of a long separation, my angel? Do accustom yourself to the idea that you must go out into the winter of the great world; with what am I to warm myself otherwise? It is possible, even probable, that for long years to come I shall be at home only a tran-

sient visitor, absent on leave; we cannot and must not be separated so long. Lift your soul's anchor, and make preparations to leave the haven of home. I know by my own feelings how painful the idea is to you, how sorrowful the prospect is for our parents. But I repeat, I have not at all desired, or contributed with a syllable to, what has come about; I am God's soldier, and whither He sends me thither must I go, and I *believe* He sends me, and that He shapes my life as He needs it.

From a material point of view my position is very good, and your complaints on that score are unjust; of which more orally; my post is more important than a Presidency. . . .

Give a great deal of love to our kind parents, and ask them to pardon me for thus destroying our quiet life, but I cannot withdraw without being false to the flag. Farewell; take courage in prayer, and do not look askance at what is inevitable. What God does is well done, and let us enter upon this thing in that belief.

Your most faithful

V. B.

BERLIN, May 4, '51.

Yesterday, my heart, I wrote to mammy from Schönhausen, but only mailed the letter here, so that it will probably arrive simultaneously with Hans's official notice of his engagement. Shortly after my return from Reinfeld he poured out his heart to me concerning his intentions, and we decided, as a plan of campaign, that he was first to put himself in communication with the Eberhard lady\* in order to get some light upon the intentions and views of his beloved and her family, of which he is in total ignorance

\* Countess Stolberg, born Princess Reuss.

## THE LOVE LETTERS OF BISMARCK [MAY,

now. The lady in question thereupon wrote him two very pretty and charming letters ; the old man was with her, and she had at once shown him Hans's letter ; the old gentleman came here day before yesterday ; Charlotte\* was taken away from Pastor Schulz and the Lady Superior, not without a painful struggle ; and yesterday they were duly betrothed, and already address each other in the familiar second person. Hans is inordinately happy, does not go to bed at all, and carries on like a child ; it was not to be announced as yet, but he could not keep it to himself, was under the necessity of "engraving it on every pebble," and mentions it to friend and foe, in the blessed belief that all the world's bickerings have now ceased, and that every one is happy. His face is entirely changed, and when alone in his room he capers about and sings the most extraordinary songs ; in short, you can no longer recognize the cross, peevish fellow that he was, and if in his happiness he would only allow me to sleep at night, he would be very agreeable ; almost too excited. . . . Farewell, my darling, with lots of love.                      Your most faithful                      v. B.

I have just received mamma's letter, full of love and truth ; she takes the matter harder than I do. God helps me to bear up, and with His assistance I am more fit for the thing than most of our politicians who might be in Frankfort in my stead, without Him. I shall fill my office ; it rests with God to give me the ability to do so.

BERLIN, May 7, '51.

MY BELOVED HEART,— . . . I must tell you in two words how I am almost consumed by the longing to be with you,

\* Countess Stolberg, afterwards Frau von Kleist,



and homesick for you all, and for the green spring and for life in the country, so that my heart is very heavy. To-day at noon, *i.e.*, before dinner, I was at General Gerlach's, and while he was grinding away about treaties and sovereigns I saw how the wind was gambolling among the chestnuts and alder-blossoms under the windows in Voss's Garden, and I imagined I heard the nightingales and stood with you at the dining-room window looking out on the terrace, and I did not know what G. was talking about. Your letter with the pistols, which you should have quietly kept if they made you anxious, came last night, and I grew so sad and sick from longing that I had to weep when I lay in bed, and earnestly implore God to give me strength to do my duty. Hans was in Potsdam overnight, where his *fiancée* lives with her sister, Countess Keller, and I had such an oppressive feeling of loneliness that I could not sleep. I am firmly convinced that the merciful God is protecting you and the children, and that He will grant us a joyful reunion; but life is fleeting, and still we are apart from one another. I am to go to the King to-morrow morning, and I leave the day after, or perhaps not before Saturday, for I am to be in Frankfurt on Sunday, and I have still so much to attend to here that I am almost in despair. Perhaps during the first weeks, after the initial rush of work is over and matters have been put sufficiently into shape to keep going in an orderly fashion, I shall be able to get away from Frankfurt for a few days, so that we may have a rendezvous at Stettin or Külz, for I am dying with eagerness to see you. For the last few days it has been impossible to spare here the four days which are necessary in order to spend one day at Reinfeld. To-morrow I shall send you the little box of books, gloves, etc.; there is no room in it for the rubbers,



which I shall send separately. For the boys I have procured two pairs of shoes, one somewhat larger than the sample; in case they do not fit now, save them for the future. In Frankfort they will pay me for the present a salary of three thousand rix-dollars, but if they keep their promises I shall not be drawing that amount very long, but shall have more in a few months; however, I shall also have to spend more. That I must become Privy-Councillor is a mockery by which God punishes all my libels upon Privy-Councillors. Hans, who has just got home, sends cordial regards, and says that everything is "exceedingly nice and attractive, the Stolbergs very kind, and she an extremely brilliant girl, who suits him splendidly"; he says that he and his betrothed will both write to mother from Wernigerode. He is provokingly happy, while I— My angel, when shall we see each other again? Would that I could hold you in my arms for only a moment, and tell you how I love you, and beg you to pardon me for whatever evil I have ever done you, my sweetheart. How anxious I am about you! Kiss the children for me, and give our parents all sorts of nice messages. Good-night, my darling. God's blessing be your guard.

Your most faithful

v. B.

Saturday Morning.

(Postmarked BERLIN, May 10, '51.)

MY BELOVED NAN,—This evening, then, I am actually to start out, and to-morrow afternoon I shall be in Frankfort. Hildebrand is packing round about me, in a chaos of trunks, clothes, books. Yesterday I did wonders in the way of business and farewell calls, but to-day much still remains for me. Day before yesterday I had a long audience with the King, whose attitude towards the affairs

with which I shall be concerned is, in my view, very satisfactory. He thanked me very much for accepting the thing, and promised that, on Rochow's return to Petersburg, he would appoint me Ambassador to Frankfort. This sudden distinction frightens me, and I am longing more than ever for you and Teifke, or Freichow. My angel, if I only had you here and could travel with you! Hans has gone off to Wernigerode, and I am so cold, and anxious to be with all that I love! Just imagine that I, miscreant that I am, dreamed just now that I was whipping our youngster so hard with a switch that the blood flowed after every stroke; I must apologize to him, the dear little duffer.

Two hours later.

Callers as early as half past seven, and now there will be no end to it. Everybody wants to go along to Frankfort. I must break off. I love you more than ever, my sweetheart, and am in such a state of longing and anxiety that I am becoming quite useless for business. Possibly in a few weeks I may have occasion to return to Berlin for a few days; perhaps I shall then find time for Reinfeld, but we must see each other then by all means. Love a thousand times over to our beloved parents. The bell is ringing again.

Your most faithful and very loving                      V. B.

FRANKFORT, *May 12, '51.*

MY BELOVED HEART,—I have not been able to realize at all that we should be so widely separated, until the railroad delivered me here last night, after a journey of twenty-five hours, and until, from the time of arising this morning till now, towards evening, I had been engaged in a ceaseless

struggle with despatch-writing, calls, and telegrams. At last, after a tedious and complaining caller has left me, I find a moment's leisure in which to write you. The picture of yourself and of the children crosses my thoughts at every step and in every occupation, and my longing increases with the distance. Were it not for the sea-bathing for you and the children, which I do not dare to interfere with or prevent, I should endeavor to bring you here as quickly as possible, although I see your dear parents' sorrow of heart, and should want to apologize to them again for taking you from them a second time, and so far away, too. . . I am, really, still at a loss to comprehend how the wheel of life has got hold of me so suddenly, pulled me out of all pleasant summer dreams, and cast me here; I must put my things in order before I can realize my new plan of life. This noon I sat among Englishmen—a melancholy reminder of our trip; they were going to Heidelberg and Switzerland; how near all that is to this place, and as soon as we are together you shall see Heidelberg at leisure, where you were so ill—the Rhine, as well; that is the excursion of two days, and points of light in my vision of the future. Now I must get accustomed to being a regular dry business man, having many and fixed hours of work, and growing old; gaming and dancing are over. God has placed me on the spot where I must be an earnest man and pay the King and the country what I owe them. I am determined to do His will according to my best strength, and if I am lacking in wisdom I shall implore Him; He grants abundance, and charges it to no one. May He have you and ours in His faithful keeping, protect you from sickness and trouble, for that do I pray morning and night more earnestly than ever, and believe that I am heard. I must close—six is my mail time. Do not prepay letters

when you write. Farewell, dearest of all I possess; there is no time during the day when I do not think of you with true love and longing. Hearty love to father and mother.

Yours forever,

v. B.

Hildebrand is all that I have here that is homelike, and is very agreeable to me; in his new livery he looks like a count.

FRANKFORT, *May 14, '51.*

MY LITTLE DEAR,— . . It seems to be getting constantly more certain that I shall take Rochow's position in the summer. In that event, if the rating remains as it was, I shall have a salary of twenty-one thousand rix-dollars, but I shall have to keep a large train and household establishment, and you, my poor child, must sit stiff and sedate in the drawing-room, be called Excellency, and be clever and wise with Excellencies. . . . The city is not so bad as you suppose; there are a great many charming villas before the gates, similar to those in the Thiergarten, only more sunny. As Councillor of Legation, it will be difficult for us to live there, owing to distance and expense; but as Ambassador, quite as charming as is possible in a foreign land. By letters of introduction I have quickly become acquainted with the charming world hereabouts. Yesterday I dined with the English Ambassador, Lord Cowley, nephew of the Duke of Wellington; very kind, agreeable people; she is an elegant woman of about forty, very worldly, but benevolent and easy to get acquainted with; I have immediately put myself on a friendly footing with her, so that when you step into the cold bath of diplomatic society she may be a powerful support for you. Previously I called on a Frau von Stallupin (pronounce Stolipine), a young woman

without children, kindly, like all Russian women, but terribly rich, and settled in a little castle-like villa, so that one hardly dares to take a step or to sit down; a Schar-teuck interior is a rude barn compared with it. Day before yesterday evening I called on Frau von Vrintz, a sister of Meyendorf's wife; the diplomatic folks assemble every evening in her drawing-room. Countess Thun was there, a very handsome young woman, in the style of Malvinia; also the Marquis de Tallenay, French Ambassador, a polite fifty-year-old; Count Szechenyi, a gay young Magyar, full of pranks, and divers other foreign personages. They gamble there every evening, the lady of the house, too, and not for very low stakes; I was scolded for declaring it boresome, and told them it would be my rôle to laugh at those who lost. Society probably does not appeal to you very strongly, my beloved heart, and it seems to me as though I were harming you by bringing you into it, but how shall I avoid that? I have one favor to ask of you, but keep it to yourself, and do not let mother suspect that I have written you one word about it, otherwise she will worry needlessly over it: occupy yourself with French as much as you can in the meantime, but let it be thought that you yourself have discovered that it is useful. Read French, but if you love me, do not do so by artificial light, or if your eyes pain you; in that case you had better ask mother to read to you, for it is almost harder to understand than to speak. If you know of any agreeable piece of baggage you can get in a hurry to chatter French to you, then engage one; I will gladly pay the bill. You will enter here an atmosphere of French spirit and talk, anyway; so you cannot avoid familiarizing yourself with it as far as possible. If you know of no person whom you like and who is available, let it go; and, at any rate, I beg

you sincerely not to consider this advice as a hardship, or otherwise than if I asked you to buy yourself a green or a blue dress; it is not a matter of life and death; you are *my* wife, and not the diplomats', and they can just as well learn German as you can learn French. Only if you have leisure, or wish to read anyway, take a French novel; but if you have no desire to do so, consider this as not written, for I married you in order to love you in God and according to the need of my heart, and in order to have in the midst of the strange world a place for my heart, which all the world's bleak winds cannot chill, and where I may find the warmth of the home-fire, to which I eagerly betake myself when it is stormy and cold without; but not to have a society woman for others, and I shall cherish and nurse your little fireplace, put wood on it and blow, and protect it against all that is evil and strange, for, next to God's mercy, there is nothing which is dearer and more necessary to me than your love, and the homelike hearth which stands between us everywhere, even in a strange land, when we are together. Do not be too much depressed and sad over the change of our life; my heart is not attached, or, at least, not strongly attached, to earthly honor; I shall easily dispense with it if it should ever endanger our peace with God or our contentment. . . . Farewell, my dearly beloved heart. Kiss the children for me, and give your parents my love.

Your most faithful

v. B.

FRANKFORT, May 16, '51.

DEAR MOTHER,— . . . So far as I am at present acquainted with the *highest* circles of society, there is only one house which seems to me to promise company for Johanna—that of the English Ambassador. As this letter will



probably be opened by the Austrian (Frankfort) post-office authorities, I shall refrain from explaining on this occasion the reasons therefor. Even those letters which, like my last ones, I took occasion to send by a courier, are not secure from indiscretions at *Berlin*; those to me as well as those from me; but those which go by the regular mail are always opened, except when there is no time for it, as the gentleman who will read this could probably testify. But all that, for better, for worse, forms part of the petty ills of my new position.

In my thoughts I must always ask you and our dad to forgive me for depriving you of the pleasure and the happiness of your old days, inasmuch as I transplant to such a distance the bright child-life, with all its dear cares, and take Johanna away a second time from her father's house; but I see no other way out of it, which would not be unnatural, or even wrong, and the strong arm which separated us when we hoped to be united can also unite us when we least expect it. You shall at least have the conviction, so far as human purpose can give it, that I shall wander, together with Johanna, with the strong staff of the Word of God, through this dead and wicked activity of the world, whose nakedness will become more apparent to us in our new position than before, and that to the end of our joint pilgrimage my hand shall strive, in faithful love, to smooth Johanna's paths, and to be a warm covering to her against the breath of the great world. . . .

Your faithful son,

v. B.

FRANKFORT, *May 18, '51.*

MY DARLING,—Frankfort is terribly tiresome; I am so spoiled by so much affection and so much business that



I am only just beginning to suspect how ungrateful I always was to some people in Berlin, to say nothing of you and yours; but even the cooler measure of fellowship and party affiliation which came to me in Berlin may be called an intimate relationship compared with intercourse here, which is, in fact, nothing more than mutual mistrust and espionage, if there only were anything to spy out or to conceal! The people toil and fret over nothing but mere trifles, and these diplomats, with their consequential hair-splitting, already seem to me more ridiculous than the Member of the Second Chamber in the consciousness of his dignity. If foreign events do not take place, and those we oversmart Diet people can neither direct nor prognosticate, I know quite definitely now what we shall have accomplished in one, two, or five years, and am willing to effect it in twenty-four hours if the others will but be truthful and sensible for a single day. I have never doubted that they all use water for cooking; but such an insipid, silly water-broth, in which not a single bubble of mutton-suet is visible, surprises me. Send me Filöhr, the village-mayor, Stephen Lotke, and Herr von Dombrowsky, of the turnpike-house, as soon as they are washed and combed, and I shall cut a dash with them in diplomatic circles. I am making headlong progress in the art of saying nothing by using many words; I write reports of many pages, which read nice and smooth as editorials; and if Manteuffel, after he has read them, can tell what they contain, he can do more than I. Each of us makes believe that he thinks the other is full of ideas and plans, if he would but speak out, and yet we none of us know a jot better than the man in the moon does what is to become of Germany. No mortal, not even the most malevolently skeptical Democrat, will believe what a vast amount of charlatanism and conse-

quential pomposity there is in this diplomacy. But now I have done enough scolding, and want to tell you that I am well, and that I was very glad and gave thanks to the Lord that, according to your last letter, all was well with you, and that I love you very much, and look at every pretty villa, thinking that perhaps our *babies* will be running about in it in summer. Do see that you get the girls to come along, or, if they absolutely refuse, bring others from there with whom we are already somewhat acquainted. I don't care to have a Frankfort snip in the room, or with the children; or we must take a Hessian girl, with short petticoats and ridiculous head-gear; they are half-way rural and honest. For the present I shall rent a furnished room for myself in the city; the inn here is too expensive. Lodgings, 5 guilders per day; two cups of tea, without anything else, 36 kreutzers (35 are 10 silbergroschen), and, served as the style is here, it is insulting. Day before yesterday I was at Mayence; it is a charming region, indeed. The rye is already standing in full ears, although the weather is infamously cold every night and morning. The excursions by rail are the best things here. To Heidelberg, Baden-Baden, Odenwald, Hamburg, Soden, Wiesbaden, Bingen, Rüdesheim, Niederwald, is a leisurely day's journey; one can stay there for five or six hours and be here again in the evening; hitherto I have not yet availed myself of it, but shall do so, so that I may escort you when you are here. Rochow left for Warsaw at nine o'clock last night; he will arrive there day after to-morrow at noon, and will most likely be here again a week from to-day. About politics and individuals I cannot write you much, because most letters are opened. When once they are familiar with your address on my letters and with your handwriting on yours, they will probably get over it, because they have no time to read

family letters. Do not be afraid of the local aristocracy ; as to money, Rothschild is the most aristocratic, but deprive them *all* of their money and salaries, and it would be seen how little each one is aristocratic in himself ; money doesn't do it, and otherwise—may the Lord keep me in humility, but here the temptation is strong to be content with one's self.

Countess Pückler, sister of the Countess Stolberg, resides at Weistritz, near Schweidnitz. Now, farewell ; I must go out. God's blessing be with you. Give F. and M. much love. Your most faithful V. B.

FRANKFORT, *May 27, '51.*

MY DARLING,—... On Friday there was a ball at Lady Cowley's, which lasted until five in the morning ; they all dance here as if possessed ; the oldest delegates of fifty, with white hair, danced to the end of the cotillon, in the sweat of their brows. At midnight "God Save the Queen" was solemnly played, because her birthday was dawning, and it was all a transparency of English coats-of-arms and colors from top to bottom, and very many odd, stiff ladies, who "lisp English when they lie," as I read once upon a time the translation of that passage in "Faust" ; that is to say, they all have a passion for talking bad French, and I am altogether forgetting my English, as I have discovered to my dismay. . . . Oftentimes I feel terribly homesick, and that is to me an agreeable sadness, for otherwise I seem to myself so aged, so dryly resigned and documentary, as if I were only pasted on a piece of card-board. . . . Give your dear parents my heartfelt love, and kiss Annie's pretty hand for me, because she stays with you so sweetly. Now, I shall not write another word until I have a letter from

THE LOVE LETTERS OF BISMARCK [JUNE,

you in hand. Yesterday I attended the Lutheran church here; a not very gifted, but devout, minister; the audience consisted, apart from myself, of just twenty-two women, and my appearance was visibly an event. God bless and keep you and the children.

Your most faithful

v. B.

FRANKFORT, Ascension Day—Evening.

(Postmarked BERLIN, *June 1, '51.*)

MY HEART,—How good it is of you all that, directly after I had mailed my complaint of lack of news, there arrives such a shower of letters. A thousand thanks to your dear parents, and I shall answer dad to-morrow, when I am less hurried than to-day, for on this dear holiday, after a big dinner, I must still write some long despatches. I was at the French church to-day, where at least there was more congregation and devotion, and the minister was passable, too, but I cannot talk French with my dear, faithful Lord and Saviour; it seems to me ungrateful. For the rest, they sang pretty hymns, these insipid Calvinists, almost in the sweet Catholic tune which you always play. . . .

Your most faithful

v. B.

Your letter had been opened again.

FRANKFORT, *June 4, '51.*

MY DARLING,—Were you not going to write to me any more? I was resolved even yesterday not to put pen to paper until I should have a letter from you, but, anyway, I will be good, and tell you that I am well and love you, even if you let your little inkstand dry up. I long exceed-

ingly for you and the children, and for quiet, comfortable domesticity at Schönhausen or Reinfeld. As soon as I have finished my hitherto rather unimportant occupations, my empty lodgings, and the whole dreary world behind, face me, and I know not where to set my foot, for there is nothing which particularly attracts me. Day before yesterday I ate at Biberich, with the Duke of Nassau, the first fresh herrings and the first strawberries and raspberries of the season. It is certainly a delightful piece of earth along the Rhine, and I looked pensively from the castle windows over to the red cathedral of Mayence, which, almost four years ago, we both went to see very early in the morning, in times for which we were not then sufficiently grateful to God; I remembered how, on board the steamer, the blue hills before us, we passed by the Duke's handsome castle, without dreaming how and why I should stand there at the window this year, an old wig of a Minister before me, who unravelled his views on national politics, while I was thinking, with an occasional absent-minded "Quite so," of our trip of '47, and sought with my eyes the spot on the Mayence bridge whence you, in your little Geneva coat, embarked on the steamer; and then I thought of Geneva. . . . Countess Thun unfortunately left on Sunday for Tetschen, to spend three months with her father-in-law. She is a kindly lady, womanly and devout (Catholic, very), attributes which do not grace the women here in general; her husband gambles and flirts, I believe, more so than is agreeable to her. I hardly believe that you will like her, but she is one of the better specimens of women of the great world, even though that just proves to me that a woman of that world would not have been suitable for me; I like her to associate with, but not to marry. Perhaps by comparing her with the others of her sort, you will

learn to appreciate her. The gentlemen are unendurable. The moment I accost one he assumes a diplomatic countenance, and thinks of what he can answer without saying too much, and what he can write home concerning my utterances. Those who are not so, I find still less congenial; they talk equivocally to the ladies, and the latter encourage them shamefully. It makes a less morbid impression on me if a woman falls thoroughly for once, but preserves a sense of shame at heart, than if she takes pleasure in such chatter; and I value the Countess Thun, because, despite the general fashion prevailing here, she knows how to keep decidedly clear of all that sort of thing. . . .

Your most faithful

V. B.

FRANKFORT, *June 10, '51.*

MY SWEETHEART,—I returned late last night from Baden and the Odenwald, and found mother's and the children's and your dainty letters, and thank God that you are well, and I, too, so far as our separation permits; the tulip-leaves were still in it, my heart; furthermore, that letter did not appear to have been opened; perhaps they now know your handwriting, and don't consider you dangerous. . . . Baden-Baden is charming, and I regret that in the course of our trip I did not take you there. Last night I slept at Carlsruhe, where my darling was so ailing, at the same inn; left there at four o'clock in the morning, in order to meet Lynar, Thun, and a dozen other diplomats and ladies from Frankfort, at Bickensbach (in the Bergstrasse). I arrived at the rendezvous three hours before the Frankforters, went to a village church beautifully situated on the mountain slope, a Lutheran oasis in the Catholic country, heard a preacher who spoke in distinc-



tively South-German fashion, but was a sincere believer, withal; listened to the confirmation of the children, for which the entire church had been decorated with garlands; then I went to sleep on a pile of hay at the railroad station, until my company arrived; and we rode on a rack-wagon with four horses, into the Odenwald and up the Melibokus—a very pretty valley on the way up, something like the Helenenthal near Vienna, but so much rain that we were all dripping. The ladies here are too easy-mannered to suit me, coquettish, wellnigh lewd in ways and speech; it was the *haute volée* of the local city folks. We returned here at two o'clock at night, and at eight I had to enter his Majesty's service; have been writing uninterruptedly since, so that my hand is lame, and still German Unity makes no headway. . . . Kiss the children for me, and tell Midget that yesterday I brought home an immense May-bug from the Odenwald, and installed it in my garden; it was a slow-legged beetle. . . . Farewell, my heart. Take good care of your health, and use the milk-diet; God grant that it agree with you. In the New Testament I am now reading the Romans; to-day chapter viii., which is still marked by a leaf of golden-rod from you.

Your most faithful

v. B.

FRANKFORT, June 18, '51.

MY ANGEL,— . . . I am dining to-day with old Rothschild, "Baron Amschel," who had an invitation sent to me as long as ten days ago; my answer, that "if I were still alive I would come," has upset him, so that he tells everybody about it: "Why shouldn't he live? What should the man die for? Isn't he young and strong?" . . .

Your very loving

v. B.



FRANKFORT, *June 23, '51.*

MY DARLING,—How nice it was of you that you have all written to me, a true comfort for me, so that I could read myself right into Reinfeld. . . . I am determined to remain here only as Envoy to the Diet; if they want to keep me in my present post, a peaceful Indian summer at Stolpmünde and a very pretty autumn at Reinfeld await us both, for in my present position I shall be of no use in the long run, and I will return home very gladly and without resentment if they don't keep their word, as to which, indeed, I do not as yet know anything definite; but it's time that I should find out, for a judicious father of a family cannot always be ready to march. In case I do not become Envoy, and am not re-elected in Brandenburg, concerning which I have no news as yet, I shall be right glad to spend once more a very quiet and gladsome year with you, my sweetheart, and the children. The fragrant wooded hills of Heidelberg, and the ivy on the castle, which you so greatly admired, allowed me to dream and meditate whether I should perhaps stand there this year and watch the sun set, with you and the babies, or, at any rate, with Midget, if the little chap is too small. How charming Baden is, and the people are devoid of character, jumbled together by the treaties of the last generation under a non-hereditary sovereign house; but they are amiable, and it touched me to see how they loved and greeted our hussars, and exhibited their pleasure and gratitude. In a wine-room at Bruchsal, where I went in the evening with six or eight officers, the landlord and his wife would absolutely not accept payment of our not inconsiderable bill; the honor of once again having had Prussian officers with them sufficed them. The hussars had brought along a former corporal of the regiment, Barella, a Pole. His only son

had at that time marched out with the regiment, and the old man had said to him at parting, "God preserve you to me, but if you accept quarter from those rascals, do not again cross my threshold." In the course of the attack the boy had been cut off from the main body, surrounded by the insurgents, and commanded to surrender; he replied, "At your hands a Prussian hussar accepts no quarter, you damned hounds!" and they struck him from his horse. The old man wept bitterly at his grave, and in the midst of his weeping said to me, "The brave lad died like a hussar; he owed that to the King." . . . The mail leaves at six, and I don't like to hold this letter over until to-morrow, because I have not written you since Wednesday, when the Rothschild dinner took place. There was many a hundredweight of silverware, gold forks and spoons, fresh peaches and grapes, and excellent wines. May God grant us always our daily bread and the interest we have to pay, and keep you, my sweetheart, and our parents and children in good health, and bless you all richly with His mercy, and I shall then be quite content, whether here or in Pomerania. Farewell, my angel.

Your most faithful

v. B.

The poodle was washed with soap to-day, snow-white, and sends his regards to Midget.

FRANKFORT, *June 26, '51.*

MY DARLING,—To-day I have been suffering all day long from homesickness. I received your letter of Sunday early, and then I sat in the window and smelled the summer fragrance of roses and all sorts of shrubs in the little garden, and while so doing I heard one of your dear Beethoven pieces, played by an unknown hand on the piano, wafted

over from some window opposite, distantly and in snatches, and to me it sounded prettier than any concert. I kept wondering why I must, after all, be so far away, for a long time, from you and the children, while so many people who do not love each other at all see one another from morning till night. It is now seven months since I received at Reinfeld the order to join the regiment; since then we have twice paid each other a hasty visit, and it will be eight or nine months before we shall be again united. It must, indeed, be the Lord's will, for I have not sought it, and when I am sorrowful it is a consolation to me that I did not speak a syllable in order to come here, and that ambition for outward pomp was not what led me to this separation. We are not in this world to be happy and to enjoy, but to do our duty; and the less my condition is a self-made one, the more do I realize that I am to perform the duties of the office in which I am placed. And I certainly do not wish to be ungrateful, for I am, nevertheless, happy in the knowledge of possessing so much that is dear, even if far away from here, and in the hope of a happy reunion. On the arrival of every letter from Reinfeld my first feeling is one of hearty gratitude for the unmerited happiness that I still have you in this world, and with every death of wife or child which I see in the newspaper the consciousness of what I have to lose comes forcibly home to me, and of what the merciful God has granted and thus far preserved to me. Would that gratitude therefor might so dispose my obstinate and worldly heart to receive the mercy of the Lord that it shall not be necessary for Him to chastise me in what I love, for I have greater fear of that than of any other evil. . . . In a few weeks it must be decided whether I shall be made Envoy here or stay at Reinfeld. The Austrians at Berlin are agitating against my appointment, because my black-and-white is not suf-

ficiently yellow for them ; but I hardly believe they will succeed, and you, my poor dear, will probably have to jump into the cold water of diplomacy ; and the boy, unlucky wight that he is, will have a South-German accent added to his Berlin nativity. . . . As far as can now be foreseen, I shall not be able to get away from this galley for two or three weeks, for, including Silesia, that amount of time would probably be necessary for it. But much water will flow down the Main before then, and I am not worrying before the time comes. How I should like to turn suddenly around the bushy corner of the lawn and surprise all of you in the hall ! I see you so plainly, attending to the children, covering up Midget, with sensible speeches, and father sitting at his desk smoking, the mayor beside him, and mammy bolt-upright on her sofa, by wretched light, one hand lying on the arm-rest, or holding *Musée Français* close before her eyes. God grant that at this moment everything at Reinfeld is going as smoothly as this. I have at last received a letter from Hans, one that is very charming, and, contrary to his custom, mysterious, in view of the post-office spies. You may imagine how Senfft writes to me under these circumstances. I received an unsigned letter from him the other day, out of which the most quick-witted letter-bandit would have been at a loss to decipher what he was driving at. If you occasionally come across some unintelligible notices at the tail end of the *Observer*, they will thus seem to you more puzzling still, and to the blockhead who breaks open this letter they will remain unintelligible, even if I tell you that they are a part of my correspondence. Only give me frequent tidings, my beloved heart, even if short ones, so that I may have the assurance that you are alive and well. I have picked the enclosed leaves for you in the garden of old Amschel

Rothschild, whom I like, because he is simply a haggling Jew, and does not pretend to be anything else, and, at the same time, a strictly orthodox Jew, who touches nothing at his dinners, and eats only "undefiled" food. "Johann, dage vid you some bread for de deers," he said to his servant as he came out to show me his garden, in which there were some tame fallow deer. "Baron, dat blant costs me two thousand guilders, honor bride, two thousand guilders gash; I vill let you have it for one thousand, or, if you vant it for nuddings, he shall bring id to your house. God knows I abbrejiate you highly, Baron; you are a nize man, a brave man." With that he is a little, thin, gray imp of a man, the patriarch of his tribe, but a poor man in his palace, childless, a widower, cheated by his servants, and ill-treated by aristocratically Frenchified and Anglicized nephews and nieces, who will inherit his treasures without gratitude and without love. Good-night, my angel. The clock is striking twelve; I want to go to bed and read chap. ii. of the Second Epistle of St. Peter. I am now doing that in a systematic way, and when I have finished St. Peter, at your recommendation I shall read the Hebrews, which I do not know at all as yet. May God's protection and blessing be with you all. Your most faithful V. B.

FRANKFORT, *July 3, 1851.*

MY PET,—Day before yesterday I very thankfully received your letter and the tidings that you are all well. But do not forget when you write to me that the letters are opened not by me alone, but by all sorts of postal spies, and don't berate particular persons so much in them, for all that is immediately reported and debited to my account; besides, you do people injustice. Concerning



PRINCESS BISMARCK

1873





my appointment or non-appointment I know nothing as yet, except what was told me when I left; everything else is possibilities and surmises. The only crookedness about the matter thus far has been the government's silence towards me, for it would have been only fair to let me know by this time, and officially, at that, whether during next month I am to live here or in Pomerania with wife and child. Be very careful in your remarks to every one there, without exception, not to Massow alone; particularly in your criticisms of individuals, for you have no idea what one experiences in this respect after once becoming an object of surveillance; be prepared to see warmed up with sauce, here or at Sans Souci, what you may perhaps whisper to Charlotte\* or Annie in the boscaiges or the bathing-house. Forgive me for being so admonitory, but after your last letter I have to take the diplomatic pruning-knife in hand a bit. Do not write me anything that the police may not read and communicate to King, ministers, or Rochow. If the Austrians and many other folks can succeed in sowing distrust in our camp, they will thereby attain one of the principal objects of their letter-pilfering. Day before yesterday I took dinner at Wiesbaden, with Dewitz, and, with a mixture of sadness and knowing wisdom, I inspected the scenes of past foolishness. Would that it might please God to fill with His clear and strong wine this vessel, in which at that time the champagne of twenty-two-year-old youth sparkled uselessly away, leaving stale dregs behind. Where and how may Isabella Lorraine and Miss Russel be living now? How many of those with whom I then flirted, tippled, and played dice are now dead and buried! How many transformations has my

\* Frau von Zanthier, born von Puttkamer.

view of the world undergone in the fourteen years which have since elapsed, while I always considered the existing one as alone correct! and how much is now small to me which then appeared great, how much now deserving of respect which I then ridiculed! How many a green bud within us may still come to mature blossom and wither worthlessly away before another period of fourteen years is over, in 1865, if we are then still alive! I cannot realize how a person who is thoughtful and, nevertheless, knows nothing or wishes to know nothing of God, can endure living a despised and tedious life, a life which is fleeting as a stream, as a sleep, even as a blade of grass that soon withers; we spend our years as in a babble of talk. I do not know how I endured it in the past; if I should live now as I did then, without God, without you, without children, I should, in fact, be at a loss to know why I should not cast off this life like a soiled shirt; and yet, most of my acquaintances are thus, and they live. If in the case of some one individual I ask myself what reason he can have, in his own mind, for continuing to live, to toil, to fret, to intrigue, and to spy—verily I do not know. Do not conclude from this scribbling that I happen to be in a particularly black mood; on the contrary, I feel as when, on a beautiful September day, one contemplates the yellowing foliage; healthy and gay, but a little sadness, a little homesickness, a longing for woods, lake, meadow, you and the children, all mingled with the sunset and a Beethoven symphony. Instead of that I must now call upon tiresome serene Highnesses and read endless figures about German sloops of war and cannon-yawls, which are rotting at Bremerhaven and devouring cash. . . . Farewell, my beloved heart. Much love to our parents, and God keep you all.

Your most faithful

v. B.

FRANKFORT, *July 8, 1851.*

MY DARLING,—Yesterday and to-day I wished very much to write to you, but owing to a hurly-burly of business I have not been able to do so till now, late in the evening, after returning from a walk during which, in the charming summer-night's air, with moonlight and the rustling of poplar-leaves, I have brushed off the dust of the day's documents. On Saturday, in the afternoon, I went with Rochow and Lynar to Rüdesheim, hired a boat there, rowed out on the Rhine, and swam in the moonlight, nothing but nose and eyes over the tepid water, as far as the Mouse Tower near Bingen, where the wicked bishop met his death. There is something strangely dreamlike in thus lying in the water on a quiet, warm night, carried gently along by the tide, seeing only the sky with moon and stars, and, alongside, the wooded hill-tops and the castle battlements in the moonlight, hearing nothing but the gentle purling of one's own motion. I should like to swim thus every evening. Then I drank some very nice wine, and sat for a long time smoking, with Lynar, on the balcony, the Rhine beneath us. My little Testament and the starry firmament caused our conversation to turn on Christian topics, and I hammered for a long time at the Rousseau-like chastity of his soul, with no other effect than to cause him to remain silent. He was ill-treated while a child by nurses and private tutors, without having really learned to know his parents, and by reason of a similar bringing-up he has retained from his youthful days opinions similar to my own, but has always been more satisfied with them than I ever was. Next morning we went by steamer to Coblenz, breakfasted there for an hour, and returned by the same route to Frankfort, where we arrived in the evening. I really undertook the expedition with the object of

visiting old Metternich at Johannisberg; he had invited me, but the Rhine pleased me so much that I preferred to take a pleasure ride to Coblenz, and postponed the call. You and I saw him that time on our trip directly after the Alps, and in bad weather; on this summer morning, and after the dusty tedium of Frankfort, he again rose high in my esteem. I promise myself much relish from spending a few days with you at Rüdesheim, the place is so quiet and country-like, good people and low-priced, and then we shall hire a little row-boat, ride leisurely down, climb the Niederwald, and this and that castle, and return by the steamer. One can leave here early in the morning, remain for eight hours at Rüdesheim, Bingen, Rheinstein, etc., and be here again at night. My appointment at this place does not appear to be certain, and Hans is going to Coblenz as Lord-Lieutenant; will live there in a stately palace, with the finest view in all Prussia. By leaving here early, one reaches Coblenz by half past ten, and is back in the evening; that is easier than from Reinfeld to Reddentin, and a prettier road. You see we are not forsaken here; but who would have thought, when we went to the wedding in Kiew, that both of us should be removed from our innocent Pomeranian solitude and hurled to the summits of life, speaking in worldly fashion, to political outposts on the Rhine? The ways of the Lord are passing strange. May He likewise take our souls out of their darkness and lift them to the bright summits of His grace. *That* position would be more secure. But He has certainly taken us visibly into His hand, and will not let me fall, even though I sometimes make myself a heavy weight. The interview with Lynar the other day has truly enabled me to cast a grateful (but not pharisaical) glance over the distance which lies between me and my previous unbelief; may it

increase continually, until it has attained the proper measure. . . . I am already beginning to look about here for a house, preferably outside of the city, with a garden; there my darling will have to play a very stiff, self-contained part, see much tedious society, give dinners and balls, and assume terribly aristocratic airs. What do you say to having dancing at your house until far into the night? Probably it cannot be avoided, my beloved heart—that is part of the “service.” I can see mother’s blue eyes grow big with wonder at the thought. I am going to bed, to read Corinthians i., 3, and pray God to preserve you all to me, and grant you a quiet night and health and peace. Dearest love to your parents. Your most faithful v. B.

LIEBENSTEIN, *July 26, 1851.*

MY DARLING,—From my little letter which I wrote you from Berlin you know how it is that I happen to be here; I arrived the night before last in such a terrific thunderstorm that I hardly survived the four miles from Eisenach up into these mountains, as the lightning was my only torch; all else was so jet-black that in the open carriage I was unable to see as far as the driver on the box. I found Albert tolerably clear in his mind again, but with the train of thoughts of a three-year-old child. . . . I do not believe that he will leave Liebenstein alive; the symptoms are those of approaching death; but God’s help is mighty, and aunty is calm and quiet, untiring and kind in her nursing by day and night. Yesterday he was somewhat more lively, but worse again this morning, so that at aunty’s solicitation I countermanded the order for my carriage, as to-morrow is Sunday, anyway; but I cannot stay longer than to-morrow morning. The doctors say that, considering his uncommonly sound constitution, he may, indeed, recover,

but that it is not likely, and already they are treating him as if they were more at pains to ameliorate his last days than to sustain hopes of his life. I am very glad that I came here; I was able to be of assistance to them mentally as well as physically, or, rather, in a doctor-like way. May God, by His grace, assist aunty to maintain the strength and calm which she now has. This is a miserable hole; nothing to be had—no beds, no furniture, no human beings. For the past week they have kept ice poultices on his head, and the body's natural functions have to be in part assisted artificially, while in part they go on unconsciously. It is pitiful to see. . . .

Late at Night.

Albert is getting along better since noon; he talks more sensibly and moves his limbs. Still I cannot indulge in hope as yet; he is too low. Farewell, my beloved angel. Day after to-morrow I shall write from Frankfort.

Your most faithful

V. B.

FRANKFORT, *July 29, '51.*

MY BELOVED HEART,—I am very sad because I have not yet a letter from you, and am tortured by anxieties on that account. You have doubtless received mine from Berlin and Liebenstein? When I left, Albert had been much better for several hours; his mind was clearer, and he had an idea of his situation, and a sense of gratitude for the nursing; it was touching to see his modesty and contentment; his behavior was just like that of an obedient child. But still the doctors had no confidence that he would recover. God strengthen the poor aunt. It seemed to me at parting that I was leaving the last piece of Pomerania behind me, and now had to go back to school here. . . .



Since seeing the tiresome people here again it seems to me quite unnecessary that you should be so afraid of appearing among them; it is not at all worth while. I am quite sick with longing for you and the children; I feel here as I did in the solitude of Kniephof on returning there after a long absence; and the papers which have accumulated lie so thickly about me; every one is storming in on me with matters that are in a hurry, and it all vexes me. . . . Do write me quite often; it is my only ray of light here when I see a letter from you, which forms the long, thin thread of communication between my love and me, otherwise I live here simply like a machine. If you could realize my situation here, you would overwhelm me with letters. God's blessing be with you, my heart, and bring me quickly glad tidings from you. Give love to Annie and your parents from

Your most faithful                      V. B.

FRANKFORT, *August 5, '51.*

MY SWEETHEART,—Day before yesterday I had to pay Hans a visit in Coblentz, on business; before leaving I went to the post-office to see whether a letter had come from you overnight, but in vain; sad and anxious, I took my departure. Yesterday, on the way back, I wanted to see Metternich on the Johannisberg, but when, at Bingen, it was a question of getting out, the impulse to come here, where I now confidently hoped to find tidings, was too strong; I remained on the boat, passed by the Johannisberg, came here by rail, and entered my room expectantly; there were letters enough, but none from you. But, at any rate, there was one from father, written at Liebenstein, which gave me the semi-reassurance that up to the 27th you had all been well. But I am very sorry that dad is not



coming here from Liebenstein; that is a short day's trip; he writes that he is starting on the 5th, *i.e.*, to-day, on his return trip from L., so that I, or a letter from me, would not find him there, even with the utmost expedition. Moritz, too, has written me a short letter, in which he confirms what he foresaw when I passed through Plathe, and confided to me under the pledge of secrecy; you will probably read it in the papers before this letter arrives—Hedwig's betrothal to Wangemann. If it has not yet been made public, then say nothing about it. Now I shall still wait here until to-morrow morning for a letter from you, then I must go to Johannisberg, to Prince M., who has already invited me for the third time without my having been there. I have now been away from you for seventeen days, and not a syllable of news as yet; my consequent anxiety does not leave me for a moment, and unfits me for all occupations. I shall have to endeavor to become more indifferent in my solicitude as to the welfare of my family, for otherwise, if such intervals in our correspondence occur again, I shall be unfit to perform the duties of my office here. This is the fifth letter I have written you since my departure, and I also addressed one to mother last week, begging her to inform me as to your health. Father holds out little hope regarding Albert; you will doubtless have word from him direct. May the Lord have you and the children in His keeping, and soon put an end to my uncertainty, which makes me physically and mentally ill.

Your most faithful

v. B.

FRANKFORT, *August 11, '51.*

MY DARLING,—The salutary shower of letters which I am enjoying, after a long period of drought, has refreshed

my soul and brought about a change of mood of which I was much in need. For when the seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth day passed with no sign from your generally active pen, I exhausted myself in adventurous surmises; now I was angry, and bethought myself how I would scold you; now anxiety got the upper hand; I went sadly to bed, and awoke with that sort of fright which generally, in unpleasant situations, accompanies the first return to consciousness. Now all is well again, and I will not scold further, but rejoice that you and the children are well, and that you are having good weather for bathing. Some of my ejaculations will have reached you in the meantime; I wrote last to father at Stolpe, the day before I received your first letter. Meanwhile I have been with Hans; he lives charmingly, in a mansion which is larger than Bellevue Palace at Berlin, with a terrace and veranda just over the Rhine, facing Ehrenbreitstein. Our new Aunt Charlotte is lovely, and pretty, too, save for her mouth; she seems to me almost too demure; they both appear to be very fond of each other, as is natural; she is orientally obedient, and he is all official zeal, which, in a way, seems rather forced; once he is sitting among his papers he no longer knows a mortal soul. Wednesday and Thursday I spent with old Metternich; he was very kind and cordial, conversed uninterruptedly about 1788 to 1848, about politics and vineyards, about literature and forestry, and combated my doleful absent-mindedness, which was brooding over the reasons for your silence, with his best Johannisberger. I had a room overlooking the Rhine and the hills; it was a splendid, warm, moonlight night, and I lay for a long time in the window, thinking sorrowfully of Vevay, of the Lake of Traun, and of the cold October day when we both travelled down the Rhine, and how green overcoats

may guard against outward cold, while against inward frost there is no protection but austere endurance and abnegation. I dreamed I was in Schönhausen, where childhood and the present were unpleasantly interwoven, and when I awoke I found it difficult to bring my thoughts back to Johannisberg. Early in the morning, pending the arrival of my boat, I took a drive to the Niederwald; when you come you shall see how charming that is. It is something like the Rosstreppe, only with the Rhine instead of the Bode River below. . . . The Prince of Prussia was here yesterday. I accompanied him from Darmstadt, and found that he is now very well disposed towards me, of which I am very glad, for, apart from external appearances, he is a noble-minded soul. He did not touch on the matter of Hans's appointment, and neither did I. I can easily realize that Hedwig's engagement must agitate you greatly. Moritz spoke to me about it at Plathe, as of something unavoidable, unless Wangemann returns changed from his trip to Switzerland. I shall be glad if Hedwig's ossifying life-plant greens out once more; after the joyless life she has led lately, I do not begrudge her the happiness she seeks; whether she will find it, we are not competent to judge. That Moritz must marry is certain, and in all probability his sister will not leave him before then. Could we not make a couple of him and Therese? But I am ashamed to be mentally making her a bridal-wreath while she is, perhaps, standing beside Albert's death-bed. . . . In affectionate love,

Your most faithful

v. B.

Who told you the yarn about Petersburg? I am not thinking of it!

FRANKFORT, *August 16, '51.*

It is already late, my darling, but after writing all day in his Majesty's service, and receiving calls, then partaking of an interminably long and solemn dinner with the reigning mayor, taking a digestive promenade, and now working again for a few hours, I must still have a little chat with my dearest, particularly as I shall probably not have time to write during the next few days. I am a real heathen, for I do not get to church any more, and always travel on Sundays—arriving here four weeks ago from Reinfeld, and three weeks ago from Liebenstein; two weeks ago to Hans, last week to Darmstadt, to call for the Prince of Prussia, and to-morrow to Coblenz, Kingward. I have a very guilty conscience about it; for I serve men on the day when I should serve only God, and always have the stupid excuse that it's useful or necessary to do so. The King will stay at Mayence day after to-morrow, and will ride through here on Tuesday. To-morrow evening he arrives at Stolzenfels. I have now really received my appointment as delegate to the Diet, and in a few days I shall be initiated, and Rochow will take his departure. They have cut off three thousand rix-dollars from my salary; neither do they seem disposed to pay me an allowance for installation expenses. The latter fact is most unpleasant to me, for the initial establishment will cost several thousand dollars, at any rate. It is possible, moreover, to get along well and elegantly with eighteen thousand, which is fifty rix-dollars per day, but I feel uncomfortable by reason of not having a criterion and estimate of this new sort of existence, so that I could cut my cloth accordingly, as to lodgings and furnishings. As soon as I am at leisure I shall write to Fritz about a second valet, and a maid for you; I shall probably not engage additional

people now, as I can hardly procure horses and a carriage before spring, and meanwhile I shall make out by renting a carriage. Your coming here will now, next to your own wishes and requirements, depend on whether I find lodgings, of which there is not a large variety to choose from, because I want a garden by all means, and not many spacious dwellings stand available. I have received, with many thanks, a long, kind letter from dad, and have gladly given thanks to God that you are all well, with the exception of your teeth, my poor little wight; would that these agitations, which are undoubtedly caused by your sea-bathing, might prove to be good signs that you will return from the sea-shore quite well. Hearty love to mother, and many thanks, too, for her kind letters. I am too much driven just now to be able to answer her. I can hardly go out walking as much as I need to, in order not to be troubled with headache. Generally I go out in the evening, in these grand, warm, moonlight nights, before going to bed. The latter I am going to do now, moreover, as I am getting sleepy, and must rise early to-morrow. Fare very well, my sweetheart. May God's blessing and protection be with you and all the loved ones.

Your most faithful

V. B.

FRANKFORT, *August 23, '51.*

MY DARLING,—In the midst of business the mail time comes on, and yet I will write you hurriedly rather than not at all. I have been continually on the move since Monday. First of all, a great gala dinner here for the Emperor of Austria, at which certainly twenty thousand rix-dollars' worth of gold-encumbered uniforms sat at table; then to Mayence to receive the King; he was quite

gracious with me, joking harmlessly and gayly for the first time in a long while. A grand supper, then work with Manteuffel until nearly two, then a cigar with dear old Stolberg, up again at half past five, review, then by rail to this place, the King taking me into his coupé; a grand presentation here, I going along to Darmstadt; dinner there, the King went afterwards to Baden, I returning here again in the evening, after three weary hours with the Minister there. On Wednesday, while still in bed, I was called to go to the Duke of Nassau at Biberich; ate there; the Duchess asked me to come again often without invitation, particularly with *you*, my heart, when you should be here. I returned late in the evening, to be awakened early next morning by President Gerlach and Jacob, who seized me and bore me off to Heidelberg, where I stayed overnight, and spent some charming hours with him at the Wolfsbrunn Castle and in Neckarsteinach; I returned from this spree only last night. G. was more charming than ever; did not dispute at all; was enthusiastic, poetical, and devoted; but she was impervious to all that, otherwise good. Day before yesterday, at the castle, we saw a sunset like ours on the Rigi; yesterday we breakfasted on the summit, went on foot to Wolfsbrunn, where I drank beer at the same table as with you; then we rode up the Neckar to Steinach, and separated at Heidelberg in the evening. To-day G. goes to Coblenz, Jaock to Italy. It was quite charming; only you were having a good time, too, while I was so gay; only write me oftener than hitherto; in the last nine days I have again had only one letter, but a very dear one. I have not had time in the midst of all these doings to reflect on poor Albert. Alexander wrote me of his death. May the Lord graciously and mercifully receive his peaceful spirit, and



THE LOVE LETTERS OF BISMARCK [Aug.

grant future firmness of faith to the dear aunt, that she may not suddenly collapse, now that all is over and quiet; hitherto she has been heroically strong. How will things go in Reddentin? Surely she will go on living there. That can be arranged with Uncle Henry, and it will be more agreeable to her. God keep you.

Your most faithful

V. B.

FRANKFORT, *August 28, '51.*

MY BELOVED ANGEL, — I am beginning this letter with a lame wrist, for since eight o'clock my pen has not been at rest, and I am quite confused about the letters. Yesterday I was introduced in the Diet; Rochow left day before yesterday, and the matter is now settled. . . . This whole expedition will be a difficult piece of work for both of us, my darling, but then I am glad that I see at last some prospect of being reunited with you and the children in a lasting home-life. Then your poor dear parents lie always heavily on my heart with their solitude; would to God that things had so shaped themselves that we might have continued to live together, or, at least, not have drifted so far apart. We are not in this life, however, for the sake of comfort, but we owe ourselves and our energies to the service of God, the King, and the country. Do write me at once concerning our poor dear Reddentins; ever since Liebenstein I have had no hope for Albert, and I did not receive the news unexpectedly. My continued occupations seldom give me leisure for reflection and sadness, but in thoughts of you and the children I have a criterion of what it means to lose one's only grown-up son, after having possessed him for thirty years. May the Lord's mercy protect us from such tribulation. I do not believe I am sufficiently resigned to

bear it in such a Christian spirit as dear aunty does. The manner of your removal and the children's, and the selection of what we need here from Schönhausen and what we shall have to purchase, I find wellnigh more difficult than the Diet affairs. . . . Write me the result of the discussions between your wisdom and that of your parents about the arrangements for the journey, and, at any rate, write me quickly and much and often; I have so very little time from morning to night, you must write much oftener than I. Many greetings to your parents. Farewell, my beloved heart. The Lord's goodness be your shield.

Your most faithful

v. B.

FRANKFORT, *August 30, '51.*

*To Frau von Bismarck, Reinfeld, near Zuckers:*

Your letter of Monday-Tuesday, my dear, which I have just received, has so frightened me that I can think of nothing but whether our Midget is still living to-day or not; according to your letter you have, in the natural course of things, but little hope. God, the Lord of life and death, can help her, perhaps has helped her, but at this distance it is terrible to have only tidings which are five days old, and not to know how things are going to-day. I confidently hope to hear from you again to-morrow, and pray God the news may be better than to-day's. Do write me oftener, anyway, my angel; again this letter now lying before me is the first sign of life which I have had from you for over a week, and I was already beginning to be sorrowful that you think of me so seldom. Business matters here have no regard for my feelings, and while my heart is filled with anxiety on the child's account, I must

listen to and discuss the greatest variety of matters, attend three different committee meetings, and carefully weigh my words, and negotiate a dozen different things, which, with this solicitude and uncertainty, I find it very hard to do. If you wish to inform me hurriedly, write to the *Neu Preussischen Zeitung*, under the direction, "To be forwarded at once by express," asking that it be telegraphed to me; particularly if you have occasion to send good news after bad, make haste to free me from anxiety. I hope that our separation will last but a few weeks more, and by God's grace this manner of notifying me will no longer be requisite. May the Lord's mercy preserve us from misfortune, and not punish us, and me particularly, in our children for our transgressions.

Your most faithful

v. B.

I have just turned at random to a Psalm, to comfort myself, and happened on the 112th, which is very beautiful.

FRANKFORT, *September 6, '51.*

As from the Chamber, my love, I now write you while in a session of the Diet; which is somewhat more difficult, as little speaking is done here, but at every stroke important resolutions are taken, so that one must be very attentive when the readings take place. Therefore but two words. For a week I have been overburdened, just as in the Chamber—hardly a moment of leisure, hardly an hour for taking a walk at night. . . . God be praised that our little daughter has recovered; I was very frightened and anxious. I calculate that you will soon start on your journey, and that by the 1st of October we shall be installed here. . . . I am much embarrassed in writing by the fact that his Excellency

the Royal Bavarian Ambassador is looking over my shoulder at the letter; therefore I close with heartiest love to your dear parents, and to you, my sweetheart, and with a kiss for the children. Do write me at least twice a week, my angel; certainly you are not so busy that you could not do that. . . . Now I must vote so as to demolish the fleet and make it Prussian. God bless you.

Your most faithful

V. B.

HALLE, January 7, '52.

*To Frau von Bismarck, Frankfort-on-the-Main, Bockenheimer:*

I have never, so far as I know, written to you from this place, and I hope that I shall not have to do so again hereafter. I have been trying very hard to think whether perhaps yesterday was not Friday, after all, when I left; it was certainly a *dies nefastus* (Zietelmann\* will tell you what that means). At Giessen I got into an abominably cold room, with three windows that would not close, a bed that was too short and too narrow, dirty, bedbugs. About two o'clock a shrewd idea occurred to me to put on the great fur coat, lie down on the bed with it, and sleep for one hour; infamous coffee, than which I never knew worse. At Guntershausen some ladies entered the first-class, and the smoking ceased; one of them was a superior lady of business (Zietelmann will tell you what that is), with two chambermaids, Stolipinic sable-skin; spoke German with an alternately Russian and English accent, very good French, a little English; but seemed to me to be from the Reezengasse, and one of the chambermaids was apparently

\* Government Councillor at the Legation.

her mother, or elderly business friend (Zietelmann, etc., etc.). Between Guntershausen and Gerstungen one of the pipes of the locomotive quietly burst; the water ran out; there we were, one and a half hours in the open air, a very pretty region and warm sunshine. I had taken a seat in the second-class in order to smoke, and there fell into the hands of a Berlin colleague, a Chamber and Privy Councillor, who had *now* been taking the Homburg waters for two weeks, for constipation (Zietelmann), and questioned me and called me to account, in the presence of several Jews, until, at my wits' end, I returned home to the Princess from the Reezengasse. By reason of the delay we reached Halle three hours late; the Berlin train had left long before. I shall have to sleep here, and travel on the *freight*-train to-morrow morning at half past six, arriving at two. Here at the railway station there are two hostelries; through an oversight I happened into the wrong one; a policeman walked up and down in the room and critically contemplated my beard while I ate a musty beefsteak. I am very miserable, but shall still eat the remains of the smoked goose-breast, drink a little port-wine, and then go to bed. Sleep well, my sweetheart. Many greetings to Leontine\* and all our children. Your most faithful V. B.

FRANKFORT, *February 5, '52.*

DEAR MOTHER,—The illness of Count Thun brings me some unexpected leisure to-day, which I utilize to write you a few lines after a protracted pause. In the next room Johanna is palavering like a waterfall with a French-woman, who is here to recommend another one, now resid-

\* Fräulein von Schlabrendorff.

ing at Leipsic. . . . The boy is just coming in with an infamous girl's-cap on his head, puts his fat hands on the table and asks me: "Papa, what are you writing?" Little Marie stretches herself in the big chair, and remarks precociously, "I am inordinately fond of my tot." Both scamps are cheerful and strong thus far, God be thanked. Leontine spoils the boy beyond measure, and accuses us of doing likewise with Marie, while I am conscious, withal, of my Aristidean fairness. . . . On Sunday we had a gala dinner at Darmstadt, with the Grand Duke. Johanna was quite stately in blue-and-white satin, entertained at table the Prince's heir-apparent, who is somewhat hard of hearing, as well as a stone-deaf old Minister with a sonorous voice; and the reigning Princess, a Bavarian lady, told me many flattering things about my wife's "good look," which would have pleased your maternal heart. For the rest we lead a life which, despite its commotion, is, nevertheless, monotonous. My time from morning tea until twelve is usually taken up with ambassadors' calls, and still more with reports by officials of our embassy; then I have meetings which end any time between the hours of one and four, and give me until five o'clock either to go out riding and attend to the necessary autographic correspondence, or only for the latter. At five a primeval old Councillor, who has held that post ever since 1816, and is called Kelchner, makes his appearance, to extort from me the signatures necessary for mail time; then we dine, generally in the company of one or both attachés; and the hour for digestion, although I am often called away while the last bite is still in my mouth, constitutes, as a rule, the most comfortable part of the day, when, surrounded by Johanna and the children, I lie smoking in the great tiger chair, and skim over some twenty newspapers. Then, at



nine or half past, word comes that the carriage is waiting, and, full of bitter reflections anent the strangeness of social "amusements" in the European world, we rush off to dress. Johanna has the privilege of being indisposed occasionally, otherwise she gossips with mothers while I am dancing with the daughters or talking stern nonsense with the fathers. Towards twelve o'clock, or later still, we are home again, and I read in bed what is to be read, and then sleep until Johanna inquires for the third time whether I am *never* going to get up. Our residence is more than a thousand steps from the city gate, and that gives us some illusion of rural independence, which—even when, as to-day, the wind howls round the corners of the house, and the rain drives rattlingly against the windows—I prefer to the clattering noise and stuffy streets of the city. My repeated trips to Berlin bring a disturbing change into our existence. For me there is more honor than enjoyment there; now, whenever I arrive there, all is sunshine for me; the court spoils me, the great flatter me, the small want something of me or through me, and hitherto not much effort has been needed to make me hold fast the idea that perhaps all this gilded-king's-guard grandeur may have vanished day after to-morrow; and that at a court entertainment I may see round about me quite as many cool backs as there are now kind faces. As the traveller sees in his mind's eye the warm and quiet place beside the fire, even so do I look forward to an independent home-life in the country, throughout all political good and bad weather, as to an agreeable goal, which, so long as I am vigorous and active, I shall not draw towards me of my own initiative, but which I shall, nevertheless, be glad to see arrive as soon as it is God's will. The River of Time, notwithstanding, continues on the way that is de-

creed, and if I put my hand into it, I do so because I consider that to be my duty, but not with the idea of changing its direction thereby. . . .

May the Lord's unmerited mercy preserve us all in body and soul.                      Your faithful son,                      V. B.

GUNTERSHAUSEN, Saturday, *March 13, '52.*

MY DARLING,—Write me at once how you are; I fear that you caught cold in the railway station. I myself got a stomach-ache from the wretched train and the cold stones, and could only restore myself by a plentiful consumption of Reinfeld sausage and malnsey, with which I began just after Bockenheim, and at Vilbel not a drop remained in the bottle, but I felt entirely well. God grant that all is going equally well with you and the children; you have so infected me with your anxieties, my sweetheart, that I departed full of anxiety. From Langgöns, I found some company in the first class, a Herr von Kr-r-rusen-ster-r-rn, apparently Russian mar-rine-officer-r, son-in-law of the assassinated Kotzebue (Sand, you know the story); he had with him two sons, five and seven years old respectively. He seemed a good fellow, and has pretty children, but they bored me, therefore I stayed here, because they wished to go on to Eisenach, and to-morrow to Weimar. I arrived here towards seven, have eaten an indifferent beefsteak, and am writing you these two lines before going to sleep, close to an iron stove which is just as hot as the room is cold; however, the latter doubtless affords a fine view in daylight. This time I find separation from you so particularly hard for me that I want at least to open communication by letter at once, and transmit to you a love-token from this place. I hope it will find you and the children

well, for which I pray God very diligently. May He be near you all with His mercy, and bring me to you again soon and safely. I did not believe that I should ever in my life experience a feeling of homesickness for Frankfort-on-the-Main, but I felt very sorrowful when at Bockenheim our house, and later the last Taunus summit, which is visible from our rooms, disappeared from view. Farewell, my heart. Remembrances to Leontine.

Your most faithful

v. B.

(Postmarked BERLIN, *March 25, '52.*)

MY BELOVED NAN,—I cannot leave this evening, because *Fra Dia*\* betook himself to Lusatia yesterday. I have had to dispose of several Danish conferences in his absence, and their consequences have to be regulated with *Fra* to-morrow. I have therefore deferred my journey until to-morrow evening, and shall, God willing, embrace you, my darling, day after to-morrow, and hope to find the occupants of No. 40, large and small, in good health. I have just dined with Malle, am going with her and Stolberg to the theatre, and I write you these few lines with an after-dinner cigar in my mouth. Meanwhile, do not worry about newspaper gossip, my sweet, and do not believe that I have any dangerous relations with Vincke and Harkort; all that is done away with, I give you my word for it, and you know I would not lie to you about it; I would sooner keep quiet if it were not true. God preserve you and the children, my beloved heart. Remembrances to Leontine.

Your most faithful

v. B.

\* Minister von Manteuffel.

FRANKFORT, *April 4, '52.*

DEAR MOTHER,—I wished to write you to-day at length, but I do not know how far I shall progress in it after having given myself up for so long to enjoyment of Sunday leisure by taking a long, loitering walk in the woods, that hardly an hour remains before the closing of the mail. I found such pretty, solitary paths, quite narrow, between the greening hazel and thorn-bushes, where only the thrush and the glade-kite were heard, and quite far off the bell of the church to which I was playing truant, that I could not find my way home again. Johanna is somewhat exhausted, in connection with her condition, or I should have had her in the woods, too, and perhaps we should still be there. . . . She has presented me with an exquisite anchor watch, of which I was much in need, because I always wore her small one. In the Vincke matter I cannot, with you, sufficiently praise God's mercy that no misfortune has occurred from any side. I believe that for me it was inwardly very salutary to have felt myself so near unto death, and prepared myself for it; I know that you do not share my conception of such matters, but I have never felt so firm in believing trust, and so resigned to God's will, as I did in the moment when the matter was in progress. We can discuss it orally some time; now I only want to tell you how it happened. I had repeatedly been disgusted by V.'s rudeness to the government and ourselves, and was prepared resolutely to oppose him at the next opportunity that offered. He accused me of want of diplomatic discretion, and said that hitherto the "burning cigar" was my only known achievement. He alluded to an occurrence at the Palace of the Diet, of which I had previously told him confidentially, at his particular request, as of something quite unimportant, but conical. I then retorted from the platform that his re-

mark overstepped not only the bounds of diplomatic but also of ordinary discretion, which one had a right to demand from every man of education. Next day he challenged me, through Herr von Sauken-Julienfelde, for four pistol-shots; I accepted it after Oscar Arnim's proposal, that we should fight with swords, had been declined by Sauken. Vincke wished to defer the matter for forty-eight hours, which I granted. On the 25th, at 8 A.M., we rode to Tegel; to a charming spot in the woods by the seashore; it was beautiful weather, and the birds sang so gayly in the sunshine that, as soon as we entered the wood, all sad thoughts left me; only the thought of Johanna I had to drive from me by force, so as not to be affected by it. With me as witnesses were Arnim and Eberhard Stolberg, and my brother as very dejected spectator. With V. was Sauken, and Major Vincke of the First Chamber, as well as a Bodelschwingh (nephew of the Minister and of Vincke), as impartial witness. The latter declared before the matter began that the challenge seemed to him to be, under the circumstances, too stringent, and proposed that it should be modified to one shot apiece. Sauken, in V.'s name, was agreeable to this, and had word brought to me that the whole thing should be called off if I declared I was sorry for my remark. As I could not truthfully do this, we took our positions, fired at Bodelschwingh's command, and both missed. God forgive the grave sin that I did not at once recognize His mercy. but I cannot deny it: when I looked through the smoke and saw my adversary standing erect, a feeling of disappointment prevented me from participating in the general rejoicing, which caused Bodelschwingh to shed tears; the modification of the challenge annoyed me, and I would gladly have continued the combat. But as I was not the insulted party, I could say

nothing ; it was over, and all shook hands. We rode home and I ate with my sister alone. All the world was dissatisfied with the outcome, but the Lord must know what He still intends to make of V. In cool blood, I am certainly very grateful that it happened so. What probably contributed much to it was the fact that a couple of very good pistols, which were originally intended to be used, were so loaded that for the moment they were quite useless, and we had to take those intended for the seconds, with which it was difficult to hit. An official disturbance has interrupted me, and now I must close—time is up. Only I still want to say that I had consulted beforehand, about the duel, with old Stolberg, General Gerlach, Minister Uhden and Hans; they were all of opinion that it must be; Büchsel, too, saw no alternative, although he admonished me to desist. I spent an hour in prayer, with him and Stolberg, the evening before. I never doubted that I should have to appear, but I did doubt whether I should shoot at V. I did it without anger, and missed. Now, farewell, my dearly beloved mother. Give love to father and every one from

Your faithful son,

v. B.

BERLIN, *Middle of May*, '52.

MY DARLING,—Before going out I will at least tell you that I have arrived safely, for later on I shall hardly find another quiet moment all day; I have already been disturbed during these few lines by Eberhard, who fell upon me in bed; by the huntsman, Engel, whom I have engaged (a handsome little lad of twenty-three); by the barber, who proceeded to relieve me of the goatee which you consider disagreeable, so that I now look just like a young



girl with a little mustache. But I was better pleased with myself before. Now I want to go to Polte Gerlach, to old Stolberg, then to divers Russians. It seems to me strange that everything is as far advanced here as in Frankfort; chestnuts and alders in fullest bloom, and two walnut-trees in front of my window already give shade, and are certainly more advanced in foliage than those near Heidelberg on Wednesday. But on the road, in Hesse and Thuringia, it was backward compared to this place and Frankfort. Only these few lines to-day, so that you may know I am well. God's protection be with you and the children. Many regards to Leontine.

Your most faithful

v. B.

BERLIN, *June 5, '52.*

MY DARLING,—I have arrived here safely, and hope that you and the little folks are well. I am actually to go south; all along I had not considered it certain. . . . It seems to me that the agitation concerning the highest personages on the Rhine will end early in July, and that during the time for which I most earnestly implore God to assist you I shall be able to be with you, my heart, continually and undisturbed. Yesterday, towards evening, Lynar complained greatly about his condition, and he made as though he would give up the whole business. This vacillating alternation of impetuous starts and dead stops is his chief disease, and I have resolutely opposed it. He needs a change of air. Old Nostitz is just coming to see me.

*The 6th.*

My letter of yesterday from Sans Souci did not get away, either, because, owing to the fabulous rain, the

train from Magdeburg was three-quarters of an hour late. From the depot I drove at once to the Hôtel des Princes, where I was delighted to find mother and all, even the barrel of the old double gun. M. was a trifle hoarse, otherwise well and in good spirits. Cecilia is again running like a lapwing. I remained until they could not help yawning. I am going there again to-day; unfortunately, I must leave again for Potsdam in the afternoon. Your letter of Thursday I read in bed yesterday, with pleasure and sadness. You have done quite well with Deter. Do not worry too much; and pray God with me that we shall soon meet again in good health. Do not be anxious if my next letter is long in coming. I shall not be able to write before Wednesday from Vienna, and it will not reach F. before Friday night, nor be with you before Saturday morning. The Lord keep you, my love. Greetings to Leontine and the children.

Your most faithful

v. B.

VIENNA, *June 9, '52.*

MY DARLING,—I arrived here safely with Lynar last night, and, after attending to the urgent despatches, we went to bed with a good supper and a bottle of cold champagne. The journey was warm, otherwise charming. Still the old abominable coaches, in which we spent a night with the Sevitts, the first class hardly better than our third. The region was pretty, by starlight and sunrise, between Dresden and Prague; at noon in the Moravian Mountains, which we missed this time by oversleeping, and here in Vienna at sunset. I lived entirely in '47 while passing the Prater, along the Jägerzeil and past the Lamb, and into the city and along a colonnade, where I remembered

that while walking there we pouted a bit for the first time—I forget why, but probably through my fault. For how much have we to thank the Lord since then? At that time you did not believe that we should have children. . . . God's gracious protection be with you all. Lynar is breakfasting, and sends remembrances.

Your most faithful

V. B.

VIENNA, *June 11, '52.*

MY DARLING,—“Don't like it 't all 'ere,” as Schrenk says, although it was so agreeable in '47 with you; but not only do I miss you, but I find myself superfluous here, and that is worse than I can make your unpolitical temperament appreciate. If I were now here for pleasure alone, as of yore, I could not complain; all with whom I have hitherto become acquainted are remarkably amiable, and though the city is hot and its streets narrow, yet it is a magnificent city, nevertheless. Business, on the other hand, is exceedingly dull; either these people are under no pressure of need to deal with us, or they ascribe to us a greater need than we have. I fear the opportunity for reaching an understanding will pass by unimproved; that will be a bad setback for us, for my embassy is looked upon as a very conciliatory step, and they will not soon send another who is so willing to come to an understanding and at the same time has such a free hand as I. Forgive me for writing you politics, but that which fills the heart, etc. I am mentally drying up altogether in this commotion, and fear I shall again acquire a taste for it. I am just returning from the opera, with old Westmoreland; “Don Giovanni,” by a good Italian company, which made me doubly conscious how miserable the Frankfort Theatre is.

Yesterday I was at Schönbrunn, and thought of our adventurous moonlight expedition at the sight of the sky-high hedges and the white statues in the green niches; also looked at the cosy little garden into which we strayed at first; it is strictly forbidden ground, so that the hunter's watchman, who stood there then, too, prohibits even glancing into it.

VIENNA, *June 14, '52.*

MY BELOVED HEART,—At this hour I ought to sit down and write a long report to his Majesty concerning a lengthy and fruitless negotiation which I had to-day with Count Buol, and concerning an audience with the Archduchess Empress-Dowager. But I have just taken a promenade on the high ramparts all round the inner city, and from them seen a charming sunset behind the Leopoldsberg, and now I am much more inclined to think of you than of business. I stood for a long time on the red Thor Tower, which commands a view of the Jägerzeil and of our old-time domicile, the Lamb, with the café before it; at the Archduchess's I was in a room which opens on the homelike little garden into which we once secretly and thoughtlessly found our way; yesterday I heard "Lucia"—Italian, very good; all this so stirs my longing for you that I am quite sad and incapable. For it is terrible to be thus alone in the world, when one is no longer accustomed to it; I am in quite a Lyraric mood. Nothing but calls, and coming to know strangers, with whom I am always having the same talk. Every one knows that I have not yet been here very long, but whether I was ever here before, that is the great question which I have answered two hundred times in these days, and happy that that topic still remains. For folk bent on pleasure this may be a very

pretty place, for it offers whatever is capable of affording outward diversion to people. But I am longing for Frankfort as if it were Kniephof, and do not wish to come here by any means. F. must lie just where the sun went down, over the Mannhartsberg yonder; and while it was sinking here, it still continued shining with you for over half an hour. It is terribly far. How different it was with you here, my heart, and with Salzburg and Meran in prospect; I have grown terribly old since then. . . . It is very cruel that we must spend such a long period of our brief life apart; that time is lost, then, and cannot be brought back. God alone knows why He allows others to remain together who are quite at their ease when apart; like an aged friend of mine, who travelled with me as far as Dresden, had to sit in the same compartment with his wife all the time, and could not smoke; and we must always correspond at a great distance. We shall make up for it all, and love each other a great deal more when we are again together; if only we keep well! Then I shall not murmur. To-day I had the great pleasure of receiving, *via* Berlin, your letter of last Thursday; that is the second one since I left Frankfort; surely none is lost? I was very happy and thankful that all of you are well. . . . As soon as I find myself once more on the old, tiresome Thuringian railroad I shall be out of myself, and still more so when I catch a glimpse of our light from Bockenheim; I must travel about nine hundred miles thither, not including two hundred and fifty miles from Pesth back to this place. How gladly I shall undertake them, once I am seated in the train! I shall probably abandon my trip by way of Munich; from this place to M. is a post-trip of fifty hours; by water still longer; and I shall have to render a verbal report in Berlin, anyway. About politics I can, fortunately, write

nothing; for even if the English courier who takes this to Berlin is a safeguard against our post-office, the Taxis scoundrels will, nevertheless, get hold of it.

Be sure to write me detailed information as to your personal condition. Greet mother, our relations, if they are still there, Leontine, the children, Stolberg, Wentzel, and all the rest. Farewell, my angel. God preserve you.

Your most faithful V. B.

(No date. VIENNA, about *June 19, 1852.*)

MY HEART,—I am delighted that our dear ones reached you safely, and I became quite melancholy over the fact that I shall have to stay here at a distance, and all alone, too. Werthern, the Secretary of Legation, is home on leave. Lynar and I took a climb up the mountains on the Leopoldsberg, behind Nussdorf, where we embarked once upon a time; and in the golden evening fragrance we took a look at our old-time path, up the Danube, to Kloster-Neuburg; a steamer was just coming from Linz—the *Austria*; if I am not mistaken, we travelled on her. . . . Why do you look with dread and pain for the appearance of the new baby? I am firmly convinced that the Lord will grant our prayers, and will not separate us; and I also hope to convince you of that, as soon as I am with you again, my darling. The happy married life and the children God has given me are to me as the rainbow that gives me the pledge of reconciliation after the deluge of degeneracy and want of love which in previous years covered my soul. Even when I am solitary, as here, the old sad and desolate spirit of the past approaches me, and I feel how little fitted I am to endure an outwardly forsaken life. The grace of God will not let go of my soul which He has once touched, and



will not cut the thread by which primarily He has held and guided me on the slippery floor of that world in which I am placed without having desired it. Trust gladly, my darling, and pray in true faith; I have the certainty that I cannot do without you, not for a long while yet, and consequently the assurance that God will preserve you to me. Do not simply remain quiet and wait, but implore in earnest prayer, and confide in Christ's promise to give ear.

Still I have not had an opportunity to go to Laxenburg, and to-day it is raining continually, so that I am staying quietly in my room, and shall later on write very long reports. . . .

Do not believe the newspaper nonsense that I shall not come before the end of July, or shall be transferred to this place permanently. I certainly hope, God willing, to be with you the first three days of July, perhaps sooner, and I am resisting any transfer to Vienna. It is much nicer at home, and, with the salary the same as at F., it is quite impossible to live here as a married ambassador. Embrace my beloved little mother for me, and all aunts, cousins, and children. The Reddentins have given me reason to hope that after my return they will again pay us a visit from Rehme. Do insist on it. May the Lord take you and the whole household into His gracious keeping. Farewell.

Your most faithful

v. B.

VIENNA, *June 21, 1852.*

Many thanks, my dear, for your sweet little letter of Thursday, just received; only a word of heartfelt love and longing for you; I am quite tender every time I think of you. Frau Meiendorf is enraged at my sentimental longing, which drives me away from business in order to play

*soeur grise* at F., as she says. The courier urges haste. Farewell, you dearest heart. My fingers are lame from writing. Love to M.

Your most faithful V. B.

V., 21st.—Six P.M., without dinner. To-morrow to Ofen.

OFEN, *June 23, '52.*

MY DARLING,—I have just left the steamer, and do not know how better to utilize the moment at my disposal until Hildebrand follows with my things than by sending you a love-token from this far-easterly but pretty spot. The Emperor has graciously assigned me quarters in his palace, and I am sitting here in a large vaulted chamber at the open window, into which the evening bells of Pesth are pealing. The view outward is charming. The castle stands high; immediately below me the Danube, spanned by the suspension-bridge; behind it Pesth, which would remind you of Dantzic, and farther away the endless plain extending far beyond Pesth, disappearing in the bluish-red dusk of evening. To the left of Pesth I look up the Danube, far, very far, away; to my left, *i.e.*, on the right-hand shore, it is fringed first by the city of Ofen, behind it hills like the Berici near Venetia, blue and bluer, then bluish-red in the evening sky, which glows behind. In the midst of both cities is the large sheet of water as at Linz, intersected by the suspension-bridge and a wooded island. It is really splendid; only you, my angel, are lacking for me to enjoy this prospect *with you*; then it would be *quite* nice. Then, too, the road hither, at least from Gran to Pesth, would have pleased you. Imagine Odenwald and Taunus moved close together, the waters of the Danube filling the interval; and occasionally, par-

ticularly near Wisserad, a little Dürrenstein-Agstein. The shady side of the trip was the sunny side; it burned as if they wanted tokay to grow on the steamer, and the crowd of travellers was large; but, just imagine, not one Englishman; it must be that they have not yet discovered Hungary. For the rest, there were queer fellows enough, dirty and washed, of all Oriental and Occidental nations. . . . By this time I am becoming impatient as to Hildebrand's whereabouts; I am lying in the window, half musing in the moonlight, half waiting for him as for a mistress, for I long for a clean shirt. . . . If you were here for only a moment, and could contemplate now the dull, silvery Danube, the dark hills on a pale-red background, and the lights which are shining up from Pesth below, Vienna would lose much in your estimation compared to Buda-Pesch, as the Hungarian calls it. You see I am not only a lover, but also an enthusiast, for nature. Now I shall soothe my excited blood with a cup of tea, after Hildebrand has actually put in an appearance, and shall then go to bed and dream of you, my love. Last night I had only four hours of sleep, and the court here is terribly matutinal; the young gentleman himself rises as early as five o'clock, so that I should be a bad courtier if I were to sleep much longer. Therefore I bid you good-night from afar, with a side-glance at a gigantic teapot and an enticing plate of cold jellied cuts, tongue, as I see, among the rest. Where did I get that song that occurs to me continually to-day—"Over the blue mountain, over the white sea-foam, come, thou beloved one, come to thy lonely home"? I don't know who must have sung that to me, some time in *auld lang syne*. May God's angels keep you to-day, as hitherto.

Your most faithful

v. B.

*The 24th.*

After having slept very well, although on a wedge-shaped pillow, I bid you good-morning, my heart. The whole panorama before me is bathed in such a bright, burning sun that I cannot look out at all without being blinded. Until I begin my calls I am sitting here breakfasting and smoking all alone in a very spacious apartment—four rooms, all thickly vaulted, two something like our dining-room in size, thick walls as at Schönhausen, gigantic nut-wood closets, blue silk furnishings, a profusion of large spots on the floor, an ell in size, which a more excited fancy than mine might take for blood, but which I decidedly declare to be ink; an unconscionably awkward scribe must have lodged here, or another Luther repeatedly hurled big inkstands at his opponents. . . . Exceedingly strange figures, brown, with broad hats and wide trousers, are floating about on long wooden rafts in the Danube below. I regret I am not an artist; I should like to let you see these wild faces, mustached, long-haired, with excited black eyes, and the ragged, picturesque drapery which hangs about them, as they appeared to me all day yesterday. . . . Farewell, my heart. God bless you and our present and future children.

Your most faithful

v. B.

*Evening.*

I have not yet found an opportunity to send this. Again the lights are shining up from Pesth, lightning appears on the horizon in the direction of the Theiss, and there is starlight above us. I have been in uniform most of the day, handed my credentials to the young ruler of this country at a solemn audience, and received a very pleasing impression of him—twenty-year-old vivacity,

coupled with studied composure. He *can* be very winning, I have seen that; whether he always will, I do not know, and he need not, for that matter. At any rate, he is for this country exactly what it needs, and more than that for the peace of its neighbors, if God does not give him a peace-loving heart. After dinner all the court went on an excursion into the mountains, to a romantic spot called the Pretty Shepherdess, who has long been dead, King Matthias Corvinus having loved her many hundred years ago. Thence the view is over woody hills, like those on the Neckar banks to Ofen, its castle, and the plain. A popular festival had brought thousands up to it, and the Emperor, who mingled with them, was surrounded with noisy cheers; Czardas danced, waltzed, sang, played, climbed into the trees, and crowded the court-yard. On a grassy slope was a supper-table of about twenty persons, sitting along one side only, leaving the other free for a view of wood, hill, city, and country, high beeches over us, with Hungarians climbing among the branches; behind us a densely crowded and crowding mass of people near by, and, beyond, alternate horn-music and singing, wild gypsy melodies. Illumination, moonlight, and evening glow, interspersed with torches through the wood; the whole might have been served, unaltered, as a great scenic effect in a romantic opera. Beside me sat the white-bearded Archbishop of Gran, primate of Hungary, in a black silk talar, with a red cape; on the other side a very amiable and elegant general of cavalry, Prince Liechtenstein. You see, the painting was rich in contrasts. Then we rode home by moonlight, escorted by torches; and while I smoke my evening cigar I am writing to my darling, and leaving the documents until to-morrow. . . . I have listened to-day to the story of how this castle was stormed by the

insurgents three years ago, when the brave General Hentzi and the entire garrison were cut down after a wonderfully heroic defence. The black spots on my floor are in part burns, and where I am now writing to you the shells then danced about, and the combat finally raged on top of smoking *débris*. It was only put in order again a few weeks ago, against the Emperor's arrival. Now it is very quiet and cosey up here; I hear only the ticking of a clock and distant rolling of wheels from below. For the second time from this place I bid you good-night in the distance. May angels watch over you—a grenadier with a bear-skin cap does that for me here; I see his bayonet two arm-lengths away from me, projecting six inches above the window-sill, and reflecting my light. He is standing on the terrace over the Danube, and is, perhaps, thinking of his Nan, too.

SZOLNOK, *June 27, '52.*

. . . Yesterday I went by rail from Pesth to Alberti-Irsa, where a young Prince Windischgrätz is garrisoned, who is married to a Princess of Mecklenburg, niece of our King. I waited on this lady that I might inform the Grand Duchess, her mother, as to her health. The place is situated at the edge of the Hungarian steppes between the Danube and Theiss, which I wanted to look at for the fun of it. They did not allow me to travel without escort, as the region is infested by bands of mounted robbers, called Petyars. After a comfortable breakfast in the shade of a beautiful linden-tree, I mounted a very low peasant-wagon, with straw sacks and three steppe horses before it; the lancers loaded their carbines, sat erect, and away we went at a tearing gallop, Hildebrand and a hired Hungarian footman on the forward sack, and as driver a dark-brown peasant



with a mustache, broad-brimmed hat, long black hair, shiny with grease, a shirt ending above the stomach and leaving visible a dark-brown band of his own skin about as broad as a man's hand; thence white trousers, each leg of which is wide enough for a woman's skirt, and which reach to the knees, where the spurred boots begin. Imagine firm turf, level as a table, on which, as far as the horizon, for miles around, one sees nothing but the tall, bare trees and the bucket-well which has been dug for the half-wild horses and oxen. Thousands of white-and-brown oxen, with horns as long as a man's arm, timid as deer; shaggy, mean-looking horses, kept by mounted, half-naked shepherds with lancelike staffs; endless herds of swine, among them invariably a donkey, which bears the shepherd's fur (*bunda*), and occasionally himself; then great swarms of bustards, rabbits, marmot-like susliks; occasionally, at a brackish pond, wild geese, ducks, lapwings were the objects which flew past us, and we past them, during the three hours in which we covered the thirty-five miles to Ketskemet, with some pause at a czarda (lonely hostelry). Ketskemet is a village whose streets, when one does not see an inhabitant, recall the little end of Schönhausen, only it has forty-five thousand inhabitants, all peasants, unpaved streets, low houses closed against the sun in Oriental fashion, with large cattle-yards. A foreign ambassador was such an unaccustomed sight there, and my Hungarian servant made such a show of calling me Excellency, that they gave me at once a guard of honor; the authorities called on me, and a carriage was requisitioned for me. I spent the evening with a charming corps of officers, who insisted that I must take an escort in future, too, and told me many robber stories. The worst strongholds of the robbers are said to be just in the region towards which I was

going, along the Theiss, where the marshes and wilds render their extermination wellnigh impossible. They are excellently mounted and armed, these Petyars; in bands of fifteen or twenty they assault travellers and invade cattle-yards, and next day they are one hundred miles away. They are polite to respectable people. I had left most of my ready money with Prince Windischgrätz, and had only a little linen with me, and really had some inclination to become more intimately acquainted with these mounted bandits, with great furs, double-barrelled guns in their hands and pistols in their belts, whose leaders are said to wear black masks and to belong to the landed gentry settled hereabouts. A few days previously several gendarmes had fallen in a fight with them, but, on the other hand, two robbers had been caught, court-martialled, and shot at Ketskemet. One never sees such things in our own dull part of the world. About the time when you awoke this morning, you hardly thought that at that moment I was flying in headlong gallop over the *pusta* (steppe) with Hildebrand, in Cumania, in the vicinity of Felegyháza and Csongrad, a kindly, sunburned officer of lancers beside me, each one with loaded pistols lying in the hay in front of him, and a detachment of lancers, carbines ready in hand, galloping behind. Three fast little horses pulled us, regularly called *Rosa* (pronounce Ruscha), *Esillak* (Star), and *Petyar* (Vagabond), the latter running alongside; the driver continually addresses them by name and in a voice of entreaty, until he holds the whip-handle diagonally over his head, and calls out *mega! mega!* (more! more!) when the gallop changes to a mad pace—a quite exhilarating sensation. The robbers did not show themselves; probably they already knew before dawn, as my charming brown lieutenant said, that I was travelling under escort, but cer-

tainly some of them were among the worthy-looking, stately peasants who at the stations, in their embroidered, sleeveless sheepskin coats reaching to the ground, earnestly scrutinized us, greeting us with a respectful *istem adiamek* (God be praised). There was a glowing summer heat all day; my face is as red as a lobster. I have done eighty-five miles in twelve hours, including from two to three hours spent in changing horses and waiting, as the twelve horses required for ourselves and the escort had first to be caught. Moreover, about one-third of the distance consisted of deepest quicksands and dunes, like those at Stolpmünde. At five I arrived here, where a motley crowd of Hungarians, Slavs, and Wallachians enliven the streets (Sz. is a village of about six thousand inhabitants, but has a railroad and steamboat landing on the Theiss), and the wildest and craziest gypsy melodies penetrate to my room. Then, too, nasally and with wide-open mouth, in a sickly, complaining minor discord, they sing stories of black eyes, and of a robber's heroic death, in tones reminding one of the wind when it howls *Lettie* songs in the chimney. The women, as a whole, are well-formed, but, save a few exceptionally handsome ones, are not pretty; they all have jet-black hair, braided behind, with red ribbons in it. The married women have on their heads either gaudy green-and-red cloths or little red-and-gold plush hoods, a very handsome yellow silk cloth over shoulder and breast, short black or dark-blue skirts, and red morocco boots which extend up under the dress, lively coloring, generally a yellowish brown in the face, and large, burning black eyes. On the whole, such a troop of women affords a play of colors that would please you, every color in the costume being as striking as possible. After arriving at five, and while waiting for dinner, I had a swim in the

Theiss, saw them dance the csardas, regretted that I could not draw so as to transfer these wonderful figures to paper for you; then ate some capsicum cockerel, *stürl* (fish), and *tick*; drank a good deal of Hungarian wine, wrote to Nan, and now want to go to bed, if the gypsy music will permit me to sleep. Good-night, my angel. *Istem adiamek.*

PESTH, 28th.

. . . My escort of lancers was not so bad, after all. At the same time that I went southward from Ketskemet, sixty-three wagons were going to Körös, in a northerly direction, to market. Three hours later these were stopped and plundered. Because a colonel who happened to be riding in front of this wagon would not halt, they sent several shots after him, and shot a horse through the neck, but not so as to make it fall; and as he, while galloping away with two servants, returned the fire, they preferred to confine their attention to the remaining travellers, who were unarmed. Otherwise they have hurt no one, only plundered thirty odd persons, or, rather, laid them under contribution; for they don't take all that one has, but demand a sum from each one according to his fortune or their own necessity; for instance, they will quietly watch you count forty florins, which they have demanded, out of a purse containing one thousand florins, without touching the remainder. Bandits, then, who can be reasoned with.

VIENNA, 30th.

Here I am again, sitting in the "Roman Emperor." Found your very kind letter from Coblenz, and thanked God that all was well with you. . . . I intend to leave here in the course of next week, and to hurry over to you, my angel, by way of Berlin. I have, in-

deed, no leave of absence, nor shall I ask for any, but shall arrange the matter verbally at Berlin. There they will realize that I *must* now be with you. Give mother my love; greet Leontine and the children.

Your most faithful

v. B.

OSTEND, *August* 19, '53.

MY DEAREST,—I hope that by this time you, with your three little cuckoos, are cuckooing happily in your nest, and are settled there, warm and comfortable. . . . I suppose you must have arrived two evenings ago, or else yesterday morning, at Interlaken. . . . Thus far I have taken three baths, besides the one to-day, and liked them very much; strong surf and soft bottom. Most people bathe just below the breakwater that forms the walk, ladies and gentlemen together; the ladies in very unbecoming long skirts of dark wool, the men in jerseys, jacket and trousers in one piece, so that the arms and legs are almost entirely uncovered. Only the consciousness of a flawless figure can make a man bold enough to show himself off thus to the whole world of ladies; and although I possess this consciousness to a high degree, still I generally prefer the more out-of-the-way *paradis* or *bain des sauvages*, where there are only gentlemen, but in the costume corresponding to the first description. I don't like to have the wet thing next to my skin. . . .

Your most faithful

v. B.

BRUSSELS, *August* 21, '53.

MY DEAREST,—I was delighted and thankful to get your letter from Bellerive yesterday afternoon. By this time I hope you are comfortably settled at Interlaken, and have found a letter from me there, as well as received an-

other — probably to-day. I left Ostend with regret, and to-day am full of longing for it. I found an old love of mine there again, and she is unchanged and as charming as she was when I first knew her. I am feeling the separation deeply just now, and am looking forward with impatience to the moment when I shall see her again at Norderney, and shall throw myself on her billowy breast. I can hardly understand why we may not always live at the seashore, or why I allowed myself to be persuaded to spend two days in this heap of stones with its tiresome regularity, where I must see ball-fights, Waterloo, and pompous processions. . . . Lots of love to all, and twice as much to you.

Your most faithful

v. B.

AMSTERDAM, *August 24, '53.*

MY DEAREST,—In Brussels and Antwerp I have not been able to get a moment of quiet, there was so much going on, and so much to see, so I am making use here of the gloaming between dinner and theatre to tell you that I am well, and that I think of you with warmest love. I have passed a horrible night on a camp-stool, leaving Antwerp at one o'clock at night on an overcrowded steamer. Through the twisting labyrinthine arms of the Scheldt, Meuse, and Rhine, I arrived early this morning in Rotterdam, and here about four o'clock. This is a strange place; many streets are something like those in Venice; some just like them, with water up to the walls, others with canals as high-roads, and narrow paths set with lindens in front of the houses. These last, with fantastically formed gables, queer and smoky, almost spookish, and chimneys that look like a man standing on his head with his legs stretched wide apart. That which does not smack of



Venice is the active life and movement here, and the multitude of fine shops, one Gerson after another, and more magnificently decorated than those of Paris and London, as I remember them. When I hear the play of the bells, and, with a long clay pipe in my mouth, look through the forest of masts and over the canals at the gables and chimneys, fantastically blurred in the twilight, then all the Dutch ghost-stories of my childhood occur to me, about Dolph Heyliger and Rip Van Winkle and The Flying Dutchman. . . .

I am very glad, indeed, to have seen Holland; from Rotterdam here it is meadow-land, always equally green and flat, and with many bushes, and cattle feeding, and some cities cut out of old picture-books; no arable ground at all. Farewell, my beloved heart. Lots of love to all who are with you.

Your most faithful                      v. B.

NORDERNEY, *August 27, '53.*

MY BELOVED HEART,—I came in here last evening in a big Dutch tub, amid thunder, lightning, and rain; have had a glorious sea-bath to-day, after being without it for a week, and I am now sitting in a little fisherman's house, with a feeling of great loneliness and longing for you, which is partly heightened by the cry of children who are with the landlord near by, and partly gains a melancholy accompaniment from the whistling rage of the storm about the gable and flag-pole. . . . I wrote you last from Amsterdam, from Brussels before. Since then I have seen a charming little country—West Friesland—quite flat, but so bushy and green, with lots of hedges, and every nice peasant cottage alone by itself in the woods, so that one

longs for the quiet independence that seems to reign there—but perhaps this feeling of good-will should be attributed especially to the fact that all the girls are pretty as pictures, as they are at Linz and Gmunden, only taller and slenderer than there, fair—colors like milk and roses, and a golden helmet-like head-dress that is very becoming. . . .

I long for the south, but, above all, for my place by your side, my home, “*wherever thou art.*” A thousand remembrances to big and small. Farewell.

Your most faithful

v. B.

NORDERNEY, *September 5, '53.*

MY BELOVED HEART,— . . . I long to be with you, although I have nothing else to complain of, and am leading a life which is mentally very restful. At about eight I bathe; that is best of all; royal waves, high as a tree, and like a waterfall when they break; soft sand and no stones. It is always hard to leave them, to climb around them for about two hours among the miles of sand-dunes, to frighten the rabbits and birds, and to lie in the warm sand among the wild whortleberry bushes, smoking, dreaming, or thinking of Interlaken. Then the rest of the day is trifled away with bowling, target-shooting, dinner, boating, promenade on the beach, and supper, so that I don't know where the day is gone, and, with a shy glance at my pens and paper lying ready, I slip, towards eleven o'clock, through my study into the chamber, to sleep capitably on a seaweed mattress.

When I had written thus far yesterday, a Göttingen friend arrived suddenly with his wife to call on me. I have passed to-day with him, and he leaves again early to-mor-

THE LOVE LETTERS OF BISMARCK [Aug.

row. I have always considered it difficult to take up again, after twenty years, a melody that has died away into silence. I had in mind a jolly student, full of liveliness and wit, and I find a sickly official, whose buoyancy has been quelled and his circle of feeling narrowed down by years of depression, brought on by the conditions of life in a small town. There is something that always stamps the provincial German; my friend has still a clear mind and a noble soul, but there is something about him of a person who has spent many years in prison, and whose thoughts linger among the cobwebs that he used to watch there, or with the one green tree that stood before his window. The fact that he feels happy is comforting, and at the same time depressing, to me; he seems to love his wife, and has three children. He is staying in the house with me, in Kleist's deserted place. I have taken him in here as my guest. . . . Farewell, my darling. The blessing of the Lord be with you and all Interlaken.

Your most faithful

V. B.

NORDERNEY, *September 7, 1853.*

PARIS, *August 27, '55.*

MY DEAREST,—For three days the paper has been lying ready to write to you, and always the wave of this mad activity has rushed me away from the table. There is always something to do, and still it's busy idleness. . . . Day before yesterday a ball at Versailles, very magnificent, and many remarkable people to see. I was presented to Queen Victoria, the Emperor and Empress, and I was treated with remarkable kindness, according to the custom here. The Empress is more beautiful than any of the pictures I have seen of her, uncommonly gracious and charming,

more the style of Malle than of Nelly,\* but a longer, narrower face than the aforesaid, more beautiful eyes and mouth, and, of course, fabulous diamonds. The exhibition is tiresome except for the pictures. Millions of most different kinds of things whose name no one knows, and whose mass alone robs one of all clearness of impression, even without the deafening din of the machines. It would be necessary to devote several weeks of one's time exclusively to it, in order to get one's bearings there at all. To-day I dine with Count Walewsky, the Manteuffel of Paris, and who has a very agreeable wife, an Italian woman. These everlasting dinners leave me no chance to rest or to go to the theatre; dinner at seven, lasting, with coffee and cigars, till nine; and then an extra hour is needed, besides, because of the fabulous distances. When they speak here of the distance from us to Moritz Bethmann's, they say: "*C'est tout près d'ici.*" It is worse than in London, where one goes about in only one part of the city. A lot of streets of earlier times have entirely vanished, and their places have been taken by long, straight ones like the Friedrich-strasse, with four hundred and more house numbers. . . . I am through with Paris now; though I do not mean to say that it has not been very interesting to me hitherto. . . . The true taste for travel has really left me. If we can find out some pretty little place for a few weeks, I should like to go there with you. . . . Love a thousand times over to parents.

Your most faithful  
v. B.

PARIS, *September 2, '55.*

*Frau von Bismarck, 19 Gr. Galleng, Frankfort, Germany:*

MY DEAREST,—By urging, and on other accounts, I

\* Vrints.

have been persuaded to stay on here for a few days longer. I had other political acquaintances to make, and want to take part in a rabbit-hunt to-morrow at Fontainebleau. Forgive this lengthening of my absence; I promise you to make up for it by coming home in good health and spirits, and in need of no more sea-baths. Also I shall probably give up going around by Ostend, and thereby regain a few days. In any case, I shall come on one of the last three days of this week, Saturday at latest. It is a wonderful city, this Paris. Think of ten Frankforts side by side, lots of streets full of shops like Zeil Street, and in every one of them the same noisiness, and as it is in Gallen Street, after the arrival of three crowded trains, and then ten quieter Frankforts set round it. A part of the environs is very pretty, something like the bank of the lake at Zürich, without water (unless one counts the Seine, which is smaller than the Main); green and hilly, with many cosey white houses, cities, and villages. If we are alive and well next year, I should like to go with you, *via* Lyons, to Marseilles, then along the Pyrenees, and back through Bayonne, Bordeaux, and Paris. It is a trip of three weeks—less, if desired—and would cost for us both about a thousand florins. I was very much tempted to do it, but do not want to be alone. We have had autumn weather for two days, stormy, with falling leaves, and half the day I am homesick, the other half I have not time to be so. An answer to this letter will not reach me here; if you have not meanwhile had the instinct to write to me here, I shall have to content myself, without news, with trusting in God's mercy that all are well at home, and especially you, my love. The pleasure of enjoying the Rhine air for a couple of weeks we can still have, and perhaps the air of Switzerland, too, if the King does not

come. We will talk it over verbally in four or five days. Until then, farewell, my heart. Give love to our dear parents and children. God keep you all.

Your most faithful

v. B.

BERLIN, Tuesday.

(Not dated.)

MY LOVE,—Hearty thanks for your letter received yesterday—to you for the writing, and to God for the contents—that you are all well. I am well, too, and plough bravely through all dinners, balls, hunts; yesterday I danced at the Frenchman's, even waltzed, with Malle, childish fashion; meanwhile, all manner of annoyance about Neuenburg; some of the Royalists who were taken prisoners are here, and they are tormenting the King in the worst way to give up Prussia rather than Neuenburg, and are behaving as though they had been of immeasurable service, while in reality they are about in the position of a man who wishes to oblige some one with a light for his cigar, and in so doing sets fire to the house; in such a case I should make only modest demands of gratitude for the devotion I had shown, if the result were so unpleasant. In the end we shall be exposed to ridicule for not having decided quickly enough to do what must be done. . . .

Meyerbeer is composing above me, is playing sickly, raging music, plays ten or twelve measures, repeating them with alterations of a few notes, then silence, then again other themes, many a one ten times before it suits him. Many people send you regards. I rode to Potsdam recently with Marie Stolberg. She was right charming, and invited me to dine with her, but I could not. I am all Chamber; the quarrel with the Ministry about the new



taxes is serious—Moritz in advance with Gerlach, in the breach against the government. . . .

Farewell, my dear heart. Greetings to the children and Pauline, also Oertzen. God be with you.

Your most faithful v. B.

PARIS, *April 9, '57.*

MY BELOVED HEART,—To be sure, I have nothing to add to my sheet of yesterday, but I think you will receive these lines day after to-morrow, or at earliest to-morrow before going to bed, and so, in case the latter is true, I will wish you a good-night, with angels to guard you, but, besides that, God's richest blessing on your birthday, for next year and beyond; may He keep sorrow and sickness from you, let the children be well, and let me be very seldom grumpy or absent, and reward you richly for all the love and truth you have shown me. I cannot procure the blue-breast here, it is true, but a heart full of thanks and love for God our Lord, and for you, my love, I shall bring back to you as a birthday present. I can only pray that things may continue a long, long time to go with us as hitherto.

Yesterday I had lots of Hatzfeld, a very long call with Walewsky, and with a remarkable old lady—remarkable in loveliness—the old Grand Duchess Stephanie, who is very gracious to me. . . . Last evening I was at the opera, ballet very fine, many pretty people, but ballets always bore me. To-morrow I shall hear a German sermon; to-day is the more important day to the Catholics, to-morrow to us.

We will celebrate your birthday next week, the day after my return. God be with you, my heart. Love to the children. What shall I bring with me for Pauline?

Your most faithful v. B.



COUNTESS MARIE

PRINCESS BISMARCK

PRINCE BISMARCK



PARIS, *April 11, '57.*

MY BELOVED HEART,—I must at least tell you, on your birthday, that I am with you in my thoughts, and that I have drunk your health to-day in cold and good champagne at the Three Frères Provenceaux, a very good drinking-hall in the Palais Royal. Then I went to the theatre, and saw a witty play, and from there Rosenberg, Werther, W. Loc, and two Russians came to see me, and drank soda-water, and now I am going to bed, and shall dream of you if I can.

12th.

I have been dreaming all night of dead and sick birds, a lark with blue feathers that I shot, and a crow that I wanted to hold by the tail, but he left it in my hand, and others, besides. You can see from this that your bad luck with the blue-breast has been in my mind all day long. I have already looked for one here, but it seems to be quite unknown; there are blue-throated birds, to be sure, but screechers from across the water. . . . Farewell, my darling, and give love to the children. God protect you all.

Your most faithful                      v. B.

PARIS, 17, Friday.

MY HEART,— . . . I was delighted to receive just now your copious letter, and to see that the children are well. . . . Yesterday, at the Emperor's dinner, I had the most charming neighbor, the Empress; truly an extraordinary woman, not only outwardly. . . . Farewell, my angel. God keep you well. Tuesday or Wednesday, God willing, I shall be there.

Your most faithful                      v. B.

THE LOVE LETTERS OF BISMARCK [Aug.

COPENHAGEN, August 6, '57.

MY HEART,—I arrived here safely this morning at seven, after a very pleasant journey; soft air, red moon, rocks of lime formation lighted by burning tar-barrels, two storms at sea, a pretty Swedish girl, and some wind—what more does one need? Only the beauty of the night kept me from going to bed, and when, at two o'clock, the rain drove me from the deck, it was so hot and stuffy and crowded below that I went up again at three, with coat and cigar. Now I have taken a sea-bath, breakfasted on lobster, at half past one must go to court, and now I want to sleep two hours more. Hearty love to all dear ones.

Your

V. B.

NÄSBYHOLM, August 9, '57.

*Frau von Bismarck, Reinfeld, near Zuckers, Pomerania,  
Prussia :*

MY DARLING,—You will have received my lines, written immediately after my arrival in Copenhagen. Since then I have been busy there for two days with museums and politics. Yesterday crossed over to Malmö, and rode about forty miles in a northeasterly direction, where I now find myself at this place, as guest of Baron Blixen, in a white castle, high up on a peninsula surrounded by a big lake. Through the window I look into thick ash-foliage, through which one catches some little glimpses of the water and the hills on the other side; the sun is shining, flies are buzzing, the Prince of Hesse is sitting behind me, half reading, half dozing, under the window somebody is talking broad Swedish, and from the kitchen comes up the saw-like sound of a grater. That is all that I can write you about the present. Yesterday we went buck-shooting—

killed one; I didn't shoot, got soaked through, then mulled wine, and slept soundly nine hours. Roebuck are stronger here than anywhere that I have ever seen them, and this region more beautiful than I thought. Magnificent beech forests, hilly, and, in the garden, walnut-trees as thick as a man. We have just been to see the pheasant-preserve. After dinner we go out on the lake; shall shoot a duck, perhaps, if we are not afraid to disturb the Sabbath stillness in this beautiful solitude by a report; to-morrow there will be a grand hunt; next day return to Copenhagen, and from there to Gr. Plessen at Lindholm, near Roeskilde, Zealand Isle; there deer-hunt on Wednesday. Thursday, *via* Copenhagen to Helsingborg, about one hundred miles into Sweden; heath and mountain hens in desolate wastes, lodgings in peasants' huts, kitchen and provisions we take with us. That will last about a week, and I don't know yet what I shall do then. . . . May the Lord keep you all, and grant us a joyful reunion.

Your most faithful

VON B.

COPENHAGEN, *August 11, '57.*

I have just come back from Sweden, and had been rejoicing all the way that I should find news from you here, but not even a line, although the mail comes daily. I conclude from this not only that you are well, but also that your time is pleasantly filled up. . . .

COPENHAGEN, *13th.*

For two days I have been hunting in the most charming region of water and woods that one's picturesque fancy could summon. In two hours I leave for Helsingborg, from there farther on into Sweden. God continue to guard you and our dear parents.

Your most faithful V. B.



TOMSJÖNÄS, *August 16, '57.*

MY DEAREST,—I make use again of the Sunday quiet to give you a sign of life, though I do not know what day there will be a chance to send it out of this wilderness to the mail. I rode about seventy miles without break, through the desolate forest, in order to reach here, and before me lie more than a hundred miles more before one gets to provinces of arable land. Not a city, not a village, far and wide; only single settlers in wide huts, with a little barley and potatoes, who find rods of land to till, here and there, between dead trees, pieces of rock, and bushes. Picture to yourself about five hundred square miles of such desolate country as that around Viartlum, high heather, alternating with short grass and bog, and with birches, junipers, pines, beeches, oaks, alders, here impenetrably thick, there thin and barren of foliage, the whole strewn with innumerable stones of all sizes up to that of a house, smelling of wild rosemary and rosin, at intervals wonderfully shaped lakes surrounded by woods and hills of the heath, then you have the land of Smaa, where I am just now. Really, the land of my dreams, inaccessible to despatches, colleagues, and Reitzenstein, but, unfortunately, to you as well. I should like ever so much to have a hunting-castle on one of these quiet lakes, and inhabit it for some months with all the dear ones whom I think of now as assembled in Reinfeld. In winter, to be sure, it would not be endurable here, especially in the mud that all the rain would make. Yesterday we turned out at about five, hunted, in burning heat, up-hill and down, through bush and fen, until eleven, and found absolutely nothing; walking in bogs and impenetrable juniper thickets, on large stones and timbers, is very fatiguing. Then we slept in a hay-shed until two o'clock, drank lots of milk,

and hunted again until sunset, bringing down twenty-five grouse and two mountain-hens. I shot four of the former ; Engel, to his great delight, one of the latter. Then we dined in the hunting-lodge, a remarkable wooden building on a peninsula in the lake. My sleeping-room and its three chairs, two tables, and bedstead are of no other color than that of the natural pine-boards, like the whole house, whose walls are made of these. A sofa does not exist ; bed very hard ; but after such hardships as ours one does not need to be rocked to sleep. From my window I see a blooming hill rise from the heath, on it birches rocking in the wind, and between them I see, in the lake mirror, pine-woods on the other side. Near the house a camp has been put up for hunters, drivers, servants, and peasants, then the barricade of wagons, a little city of dogs, eighteen or twenty huts on both sides of a lane which they form ; from each a throng looks out, tired from yesterday's hunt. . . .

17th.

Six wolves were here this morning, and tore a poor ox to pieces ; we found their fresh tracks, but did not catch sight of them. We have been on the go from 4 A.M. to 8 P.M., shot four heath-hens, slept two hours on mown heather, now dead tired and to bed.

19th.

There is no possibility of getting off a letter from here without sending a messenger sixty miles to the post-office, so I shall take this myself to-morrow to the coast. I fell yesterday just as the dog pointed, and I was looking more at him than at the ground, and I hurt my left shin-bone. Yesterday we had an uncommonly severe hunt, far away and rocky, and, though it brought me in a young

mountain-cock, it tamed me down to such an extent that to-day I am staying in the house putting on poultices, so that I shall be ready for travelling to-morrow, and for hunting day after. I admire myself for having stayed behind alone in this charming weather, and can hardly help hoping, with shameful jealousy, that the others, too, will not shoot anything. It is a little too late in the year; the fowl are shy, or the game would be much more plentiful. Charming surroundings we had yesterday, . . . all just as God made it—forest, rock, heath, bog, lake. I shall probably emigrate to this place yet some day. . . . I have amused myself all day trying to learn Danish from the doctor who makes my poultices. We brought him with us from Copenhagen. There are none here. Since the report that a doctor is present has spread through the woods, from twenty to thirty of the hut people have been streaming in here daily to get his advice. Sunday evening we gave a very jolly dancing affair for the peasants who live within the twenty-five square miles of forest in the hunting-grounds; and the music was alternately sung and played. There they heard of the learned man, and now come people who have been hopelessly crippled for twenty years, hoping for help from him, as savages do from a magician.

GUNARSTORP, *August 21.*

Yesterday we took the journey out of the forest, and to-day here, about fifteen miles from Helsingborg, have hunted a little and dined. I couldn't walk, because of my leg, so went along on the hunt riding. In spite of this impediment, I was the only one that succeeded in bringing down a cock; there are many here, but already too shy; they don't stay near. It is incredible with what surefooted-

ness my horse climbed over stones and broke through thickets; no hunting dog can do better. It was as though I had four legs that I was moving myself; unfortunately he is not for sale, or I should buy him for you. . . . The conditions here are much milder than I expected. Fine fruit and walnut trees, glorious old beech forests, at whose edge stands the house, with its gables and towers, overlooking, towards the other side, a fine expanse of wheat; under my window a French garden, with old hedges of box and beech. The revolution seems to have passed this strange land, without leaving a trace, while in Denmark it turned everything topsy-turvy. In Sweden everything gives an impression of military discipline, more so than at home thirty years ago, almost more so than at any time up to 1806. . . .

Now fare well, very well, my heart. God keep you, and all our family. Your most faithful v. B.

MEMEL, *August 29, '57.*

MY DARLING,—To be sure, I cannot tell you much that is new since my Berlin letter of day before yesterday, but still I can give you the news that I have arrived here safely, and am casting loving glances towards you over the sea; if the latter were not round, and my eyes were better, and the weather clearer, perhaps I could catch a glimpse of you, at this sunset hour, on the pier at Stolpmünde; there are no mountains, at least, between us, for I hardly believe that the rocks of Wertenhausen, near Freiche, reach as far as the straight line between here and the point where the pier extends. From Natel to Dirschau, my thoughts were centred on Reinfeld, and at Elburg I saw, not Hohendorf, to be sure, but still Saxe-Drausen and something of Schlobitten. Your most faithful v. B.

KÖNIGSBERG, *September 12, '57.*

MY DEAREST,—It was with great delight that I found your four letters in Polaugen (which, by the way, is not in Prussia, but in Russia), and learned that things have gone well with you and the children. It seems that, up to the 8th, you had not yet received any letters from me, which I don't understand, particularly in the case of the first, for I mailed it in Polaugen on August 29th; the other two might reasonably be still on the way. I have been prospering; the Finland folk all showed me touching kindness, such as one will rarely meet as a stranger in any other country. I have brought down, besides divers roebucks and fallow-deer, a very strong buck, which, by straight (not round) measure, was six feet eight inches high, and then, too, carried its colossal head above that, probably nine or ten feet high in the air. He fell like a hare, but, as he was still alive, I put another shot into him, in pity, and had hardly done so when another, and probably bigger one, came running by, so near me that Engel, who was loading, sprang behind a tree, so as not to be run down; and I had to content myself with looking at him in friendly fashion, as I had no more shots. I can't seem to get rid of my vexation over this, and have to fret out some of it to you. I wounded one, besides, and they will probably find that yet, and one I completely missed. So I must have shot eight head of game. Day before yesterday evening we left Dondangen, and covered the distance of about one hundred miles back to Memel, without a road, through woods and wastes, in twenty-nine hours, in an open wagon, over stock and stone, so that it was necessary to hang on to keep from tumbling out. After three hours of sleep in Memel we came here early this morning by the steamer, and we leave here for

Berlin this evening, arriving there to-morrow evening. "We" are, namely, Behr and myself. I can't stop in Hohendorf; I ought to have been in Berlin by to-day, according to my furlough; but then I should have had to give up the best hunting, that in Dondangen, with the big deer, or "bollen," as they call them there, and I should not have seen how the axle of a peasant wagon broke under the big beast's weight. Monday comes the Emperor to Berlin, and so I ought to be there beforehand, and was to get there "several days" in advance! . . . Well, farewell, my angel. I must write some other letters; give lots of love to our parents and children, and tell the last that their letters gave me a great deal of pleasure.

Your most faithful

V. B.

BERLIN, Tuesday [*April*, '58 (?)].

(Not dated.)

I count on being able to leave to-morrow morning, thus reaching you, my heart, to-morrow evening, where it is nicer than here, even though there is a lack of curtains. Here everybody is intriguing against everybody else, and every one is hoping I shall put my eggs in his nest. The result is that I hardly get any rest at night, and still make no progress in regular business matters. This evening I spend at the Princess's; then to bed late and up early. I shall sink very weary into your arms. . . . The news about old Schreck\* is very sad; the light of his mind is going out, and it is hoped that the increasing weakness will soon put an end to it all. Yet, if it is God's will, He can turn all this human anxiety to folly, and make the glorious brown eyes clear again. The case meets with

\* General von Schreckenstein.



THE LOVE LETTERS OF BISMARCK [Aug.'58

deep sympathy here; the journey to England, on which the old gentleman went along against his will, through a feeling of duty, used up his last remaining powers. . . . Last evening I was at Eb. Stolberg's. She sends you cordial regards.                      Your most faithful                      v. B.

FRANKFORT, *August 1, '58.*

DEAR MOTHER,—Both your dear letters have given me great pleasure in my loneliness; every sign of life from the dear ones who belong to me fills in somewhat the emptiness that surrounds me, and of which I was especially sensible last evening, when your letter of the 26th came. I had accompanied the Prince of Prussia as far as Rudesheim; from there Princess Carl took me with her to Schlangenbad. . . . Then I was in Wiesbaden for several hours, on business with the King of Holland, and arrived in my quiet house just with the sunset light, which lay, very beautiful, on the Taunus, but somehow not conducive to a cheerful mood. . . . Farewell.

Your true son,

v. B.

III

LETTERS WRITTEN WHILE MINISTER TO  
ST. PETERSBURG AND PARIS

1859-1862



BERLIN, *January 15, '59.*

MY DEAR HEART,—I sent word yesterday through Engel of my well-being, because it was not possible for me to get to my desk. . . . Do you know that Carl Canitz is engaged?—to a young Englishwoman! More than that is not known about her here. She will have a hard time with the Benedick-devil in him. Pourtalès is actually nominated for Vienna. O. Usedom is still fighting for Frankfurt, but without prospect of result. She will probably go to Brussels, Savigny perhaps to Munich, Goltz to Constantinople. They are kinder to me at court than ever, especially the Prince, but the Princess, too. The Ministers are in an uncomfortable position; the Prince is urging them to the right; their professed friends in the Chamber are dragging them to the left, and, to be sure, a person can only go one way at once. I still think I shall be back on Thursday, though the Prince expressed the hope that I should be able to stay longer. As yet I have no letter from you. Love to the children and Jenny.

Your most faithful

V. B.

Your letter has just come; many thanks.

BERLIN, *March 7, '59.*

MY DEAREST, BEST ONE,—I have arrived safely here—Hôtel Royal. I couldn't say a real good-bye to you yesterday in the crowd of people, or to the children, either.

There remained in me a feeling of dissatisfaction because of this, and the weather was depressingly sad. The last good look was at the Beckers; as I could find no card, I threw them a pencil as the token of a last greeting, and I fear it went into somebody's face. In spite of the dull light, Bockenheim and the country about Vilbel never seemed so beautiful to me as at my departure. At Butzbach it got dark inside and out. To-day a cold, glistening sun is shining, with wind and dust—real diplomats' weather. . . . I am well, but full of grievous longing for you. Give love to the children, and caress them for me, and lots of nice things to the Beckers. With all the wishes for blessings upon you that a human heart can hold.

Your most faithful

v. B.

Don't fail to rest well at night.

BERLIN, *March 9, '59.*

MY DEAR HEART,—Thanks for your letters, which came yesterday and to-day; I can but tell you, in few words, that I am well, and shall be happy if I can start in a week; it is hardly likely to be sooner. . . . I shall not be able to take Putsch along to Petersburg, since Werther tells me I could not make use of more than two servants at most who speak no Russian. Do not tell him so as a finality, but prepare him for it. Werther's wife is tearful at having had to leave Petersburg. He thinks the salary enough to live on, though I find everything he tells me of horribly dear; he has, however, saved something.

I must go. God's grace be with you and all of us. Loving greetings to children, Jenny, Beckers, Gayette.

Your faithful

v. B.

Snow and sunshine alternate here.

BERLIN, *March 17, '59.*

MY BELOVED HEART,—I am still here, to my great annoyance; I am utterly at a loss what to do, and how to answer the eternally repeated questions about my departure. I had fixed on Saturday as my last day, and yesterday was told that a letter from the Prince to the Czar, which I must carry, will not be ready till the beginning of next week. Yesterday I had callers while still in bed, and one followed another, so that for more than two hours I could not rise and dress. I wanted to write you yesterday and the day before, but was kept beset, so that each time I had to drive the last caller away forcibly, in order to attend to my own affairs before meal-time. Day before yesterday, dinner with Schleinitz; yesterday, Prince Carl; to-day, Budberg. I am utterly indignant with this purposeless time-killing, in which one cannot catch breath. The parcel with travelling comforts reached me to-day. Saturday or Sunday I shall go to Schönhausen, probably with Malle. What Olympia says of her is nonsense; she has hardly seen her all winter. Malle has Kissingenized for three months of the winter, and it has done her much good; she is somewhat stronger, and very cheerful. Speak very guardedly to Olympia; she will have tales to tell even if you do not open your mouth. . . . Farewell, my sweetheart. I cannot start before Tuesday. Hearty love. God's mercy guard you all.

V. B.

Have the children's bad teeth stopped growing again, that they have to be plugged?

BERLIN, *March 22, '59.*

MY DEAR HEART,—Just what I predicted has happened. After being made to wait here sixteen days needlessly I was informed yesterday evening at five that I must



be off in a hurry, and this evening at latest! That I find I cannot do, and shall not leave before to-morrow (Wednesday) evening, and even by that time I shall have difficulty in getting through with all farewell notices. Your complaint that I do not treat you well in the matter of letters shows true feminine injustice; I wrote on Friday and on Monday, and had Klüber write on Sunday. If I had wanted to write between times, I should have had to do it from a Ghent or Potsdam coupé. If you were only to see how things go with me here, you would simply admire me for writing at all. I neither believe nor wish that we are to stay only a year in Petersburg; and if it were so, it's the same thing whether we are saddled then with our own things or Werther's; it depends entirely upon which can be arranged most cheaply for our use there. Hearty greetings to children, and Jenny and Beckers and Gayette and Eisendeckers, etc. A week from to-day, God willing, I shall be skating on the Neva. Bücking, who has just been in to see me, says he would send me to Petersburg for my health if I were not going there, anyway.

Your most faithful

v. B.

KÖNIGSBERG, *March 24, '59.*

MY DEAR HEART,—I arrived here two hours ago, and already the diligence is waiting at the door—one large four-horse affair, and one baggage-wagon with two horses. To-morrow at noon I expect to be in Kowno. We are both hale and hearty, and send best greetings. Lots of love to the children, Jenny, and all friends. Klüber is a bit old-maidish; he must get married. May he make as happy a choice in it as your most faithful husband. I do not grudge it him.

KOWNO, *March 25, '59.*

MY LOVE,—Snow-storms all the way from Königsberg here, six inches deep; everything white; 36° to 47°; ice. Rode one hundred and forty-nine miles in twenty-eight hours, with post-horses, in Prussia and Russia equally bad; crossed the Niemen at night in beautiful clear winter weather; old city, river banks mountainous, prettily lighted by stars and snow and window-lights; black, rushing water, broad as the Elbe. Russians very amiable, but post-horses bad, and often none. We shall sleep here four hours, then on to Düna. Good-night, with love.

Your most true

v. B.

PSKOV, *March 28, '59.*

MY DEAR HEART,—Russia has stretched out under our wheels; the versts increased in number at every station, but at last we are in the haven of the railway. Drove ninety-six hours from Königsberg without stopping, only in Kowno we slept four hours, and three in Egypt (a station near Dünaburg)—I think it was day before yesterday. I feel very well now, only my skin burns, for I sat outside almost all the way, and the temperature was from two to twenty-four degrees below freezing-point. In the wagon there was not room for Klüber and me, so I changed places with Engel. We had snow so deep that, with six and eight horses, we literally got stuck, and had to get out. Still worse were the slippery mountains, especially going down; for twenty paces we took an hour, because the horses fell four times and eight times interfered with one another; added to that night and wind, a real winter journey, without modification. The wagon was too heavy. Klüber had about four hundred pounds of things; for one it would hardly have been comfortable; for two it was

torture. It was impossible to sleep in my seat outside, on account of the cold, but still it was better in the open air; the sleep I can make up. The Niemen was open; the Wilia, a river that you hardly know, but as broad as the Main and very rapid, was thick with ice. The Düna had only one clear spot, where, by dint of four hours' waiting and three hours' work, we got across. The whole region is something like old Pomerania, without villages, much as it is between Bütow and Berent; some good forests, but the majority like the New Kolziglow pines. Plenty of birch forest, miles of marshes; road straight as an arrow; every fourteen to twenty-two versts a post-station like Horuskrug, all well arranged, everything to be had, and all heated; everybody very polite, and service prompt; only the other side of Dünaburg not horses enough; waited at the station near Kowno three hours, and then—tired beasts. Where the road was good they travelled splendidly, running miles at a time with the big, heavy wagon; but they cannot pull where the road is hard, however severe the postilions are. The ordinary man pleases me in general, judging from first appearances. It is now six; we have just dined; opposite me (I am writing on the table-cloth) sits Klüber, who is smoking pensively. At seven forty-five the train leaves, two versts away. To-morrow morning, at four fifteen (seven days after starting), if it is God's gracious will, I shall be in Petersburg. . . . God bless you and children. Give each one love and kisses. My head is growling a little. For miles around I see sheets of snow, birches, the sunset—beautiful clear winter weather. To-morrow I shall sleep all day long. Farewell. Your most faithful V. B.

Forgive this confused letter, but I have been five nights out of bed, and now the sixth.

PETERSBURG, March 29, '59.

MY DEAR HEART,—With God's help I have arrived here safely, stopping for the present at the Hôtel Demuth, and I have suddenly grown twelve days younger, for they date here the 17th. Through incorrect translation into Russian of my Pskov despatch, it failed of its purpose; and this morning early, at five, after I had left Engel and the conductor with our wagon and baggage, I found myself face to face with the driver and the hostler of the hotel, and thrown upon the Russian that I had managed to learn *en route*. My magic formula, "*Pruski paslaunik*," extracted only the reply that he did not live there; but when I said, "*Jassam*" ("I myself am he") the Russian became wide-awake, and ran to get various people with barbarous names; but even they spoke none of the Western languages. But I am tolerably well fixed here now, and although the "German servant" is ill, I was able to get washed, to breakfast, and drive to the legation. You see I have travelled continually from Wednesday evening until this morning (Tuesday). In summer they tell me it is a trip of sixty hours to Königsberg, but now it has been a hundred and eight. I have come out of it splendidly. The railway coupés are much better than ours, and heated. I slept eight hours as if I were in bed, and now need no more rest. When you write to me, bear in mind that all foreign letters are opened, and that this is generally known. So don't scold about anything, for it is taken for granted that one means to say to the government what is written by mail. A traveller will take these lines along with him; nobody knows how long they will be stuck in the snow; do not be anxious and impatient if you are a long time without news. It's thawing here to-day, but barely so. My head is still full of post-houses and verst-posts, and the ringing of the

horses' bells, the screaming of the postilions, and the out-rider's eternal "*Pravée—i verräter, skarrée, i, skarréeee—i!*" and the blinding snow and wind, and the poor horses that were so willing to gallop when the wheels would only go round. A "*kareta potschtowaja*" stood on top, and a ramshackle affair it was, a thing like a house, and packed so high that we brushed the highest lintels. With this monster the people drove not only at a gallop, but at full speed, with six and eight horses, two or three miles at a time; with us it is forbidden to drive rapidly down hill or over bridges, but in Russia the gallop seems to be prescribed in both cases, even where it is very steep and the horses have just fallen. But, after all, it was amusing—if I only did not have to do it right over again. Perhaps you would like it in summer—or wouldn't you? About every fifty miles the Czar has resting-quarters in a post-station; and there everything is very comfortably arranged, and you would be allowed to use them as well as I.

Farewell, my angel. I must be off now to Gortchakoff.  
 Love to the children.      Your very loving      v. B.

PETERSBURG, April 1, '59.

MY DEAR HEART,—How nice it was to be wakened this morning by the letter from you and the children! For half an hour I managed to forget that fifteen hundred miles lie between us.

4th.

I wrote these few lines on my birthday; then business interfered. It is singular that I have taken up my office just on the 1st of April, for it was on the same day that I had my first audience with the Czar, which his amiable manner made really a birthday present. Then

I drank to your health a bottle of Rhine wine, and one of champagne, with Klüber, all for seven rubles; but we enjoyed it immensely. I wanted to write you a long letter, my beloved, and now I must scribble in great haste; yet there is no one I want so much to write to. On April 1st (13th) I shall have another birthday here, just coinciding with your dear one. The Neva stands like granite, and bears loaded wagons, and street-lamps stand on the ice at the crossings. Kiss the children for me. Be always my dearest. God be with you.

Your most faithful

V. B.

PETERSBURG, *April 4, '59.*

MY DEAR HEART,—Now that the rush of to-day noon is past, I sit down in the evening to write you a few more lines in peace. When I closed my letter to-day I did it with the intention of writing to you next a birthday letter, and thought I had plenty of time for it; it is only the 23d of March here. I have thought it over, and find that a letter must go out to-day exactly to reach Frankfort on the 11th; it is hard to get used to the seven days' interval which the post needs. So I hurry my congratulations. May God grant you His rich blessing in soul and body, for all your love and truth, and give you resignation and contentment in regard to the various new conditions of life, contrary to your inclinations, which you will meet here. We cannot get rid of the sixtieth degree of latitude, and we have not chosen our own lot. Many live happily here, although the ice is still solid as rock, and more snow fell in the night, and there is no garden and no Taunus here.

I could get along very well indeed here if I only knew the same of you, and, above all, if I had you with me. All



official matters—and in them rests really the calling which in this world has fallen to my lot, and which you, through your significant “Yes” in the Kolziglow church, are bound to help bear in joy and sorrow—all official matters are, in comparison with Frankfort, changed from thorns to roses; whether they will ever blossom is, indeed, uncertain. The aggravations of the Diet and the palace venom look from here like childishness. If we do not wantonly make ourselves disagreeable, we are welcome here. Whenever the carriages are called here, and “*Prusku passlanika*” (“Prussian carriage”) is cried out among those waiting, then all the Russians look about with pleasant smiles, as though they had just popped down a ninety-degree glass of schnapps. There is some social affair every evening, and the people different from those in Frankfort. Your aversion to court life will weaken. You cannot fail to like the Czar; you have seen him already—have you not? He is extremely gracious to me, as well as the Czarina—the young Czarina, I mean. And it is easy to get along with the mother, in spite of her imposing presence. I dined with her to-day with the Meiendorfs and Loen,\* and it was just like that dinner at our house with Prince Carl and the Princess Anna, when we enjoyed ourselves so much. In short, only take courage, and things will come out all right. So far I have only agreeable impressions; the only thing that provokes me is that smoking is not allowed on the street. One can have no idea in what disfavor the Austrians are over here; a mangy dog will not take a piece of meat from them. I am sorry for poor Szechenyi; I do not dislike him. They will either drive things to a war from here, or let it come, and then they will stick

\* Military *chargé*.

the bayonet into the Austrians' backs; however peacefully people talk, and however I try to soften things down, as my duty demands, the hatred is unlimited, and goes beyond all my expectations. Since coming here I begin to believe in war. There seems to be no room in Russian politics for any other thought than how to strike at Austria. Even the quiet, mild Czar falls into rage and fire whenever he talks about it, as does the Czarina, although a Darmstadt Princess; and it is touching when the Dowager Czarina talks of her husband's broken heart, and of Francis Joseph, whom he loved as a son, really without anger, but as if speaking of one who is exposed to God's vengeance. Now I have still much to write for the carrier to-morrow, and this you will not receive, I suppose, until two days after your dear birthday, just when I am celebrating mine by the calendar here. Farewell, my dear, and give each child a sweet orange from me. Love to all.

Your most faithful

V. B.

PETERSBURG, *April 8, '59.*

DEAR PARENTS,—The loss of the letter was an advantage to me, for in this way I had the pleasure of seeing the Zuckers post-mark two days in succession; the lost one came to-day, the other yesterday. The tokens of your love cannot tell me anything that had not already reached me in embodied form. And yet my delight in them is always new, and the home-note does me twice as much good here amid the strange din in a foreign land. I heartily thank God and yourselves for the love and truth which I know is in your hearts, and of which I am sure until our earthly end, and, if God will, beyond. I have good news of Johanna and the children—one letter just on the 1st,

and one since, written on the 1st. I want for nothing here, except her presence—then I shall be able to endure God's long winter; there are even Laplanders, with lung trouble, who come here to seek recovery in the milder climate. I left Berlin Wednesday evening, and reached here early on Tuesday; the first and the last night (from Pskov) by railway, but all the time between I slept only six or seven hours on stage-seats. Now the snow was deep as sand-dunes, and now there was none. At many stations horses were lacking, as all coaches needed twice or three times as many as usual; crossing half-frozen rivers at night; slippery, steep mountains, where the horses were worn-out going up, and kept falling on the way down. You would not have liked it, dear mother, when the horses, eight in number, after lying in a snarl one upon another, had hardly been harnessed again, before, with the heavy and high-packed wagon, they went tearing at full gallop down the mountain into the night. Now and then we walked, because the coach stuck fast in the snow-drifts. Thus it happened that it took us the entire time from Thursday afternoon to Monday evening to travel about five hundred miles, from Königsberg to Pskov, without stopping anywhere for the night. At Pskov we were caught up by the exceedingly well-appointed railroad coupé, in which I slept nine hours without stirring, and was wakened only with difficulty here at the station early on Tuesday. I am very glad to have taken this trip; I shall hardly repeat the experience, since the rapid progress of the railway is yearly reducing the stretch of road without one.

The weather has been changeable since I came, with moderate temperature, between clear frost, snow, and mud; the Neva still stands stable, yet it seems closed to wagon

traffic to-day; at any rate, I saw only foot passengers on the ice. You, my dear father, I want to thank for thinking kindly of my fondness for rearing forest trees. May our grandchildren find God's blessing in their shade. Johanna writes constantly very dear letters; to-day one of Herbert's came with hers. God be praised that they are all well, and may He, dear parents, grant the same to you. Somewhere about the time of the Fête of St. John I shall probably take Johanna away from you, if it is God's will.

With hearty love, the true son of you both,                      V. B.

PETERSBURG, *April* 19, '59.

Your account of spring colors and sounds has made me right homesick; I have been feeling badly about it all day, and I have just now, before sunset, taken a good look again at the Neva ice, to see whether it will not be kind enough to go soon; it is already grayish-black, which they say is a good sign. But the sea of houses, the ice of stone will not melt. For three weeks I have seen only stone and ice; either the city has no gates, or they are inaccessible. That is an extra reason for my preference for the Stenbach house, which stands right by the large Neva bridge leading to the islands. I felt quite sorrowful when I saw from there something like forest or hills glistening on the horizon far over the water. I have not seen God's earth since Kobbeltbade, the last station before Königsberg; there it began to snow the 24th of March. I drive out to make calls every day, and still do not get through, in this city, so many miles wide. In doing this I never learn my way around, looking out of the closed coupé; the houses have no numbers, and I cannot find any of my acquaintances again without a coachman. Then the order is, "Demidoff house, on Nevski Prospekt," but Nevski has certainly

two hundred houses; then let's see you pick out Demidoff's! My guides are the merchants' signs, especially the Russian forms, under which one is touched to decipher the names Schulze, Müller, and Schmidt. To-day I discovered Jäger, too, and your mother's friend Hanoschke, really Ganoschke, for there is no H at all. Just respectable citizens of Berlin under the frizzled beard of the Muscovite hieroglyphics. This week, much to my delight, calling stops, *on fait ses dévotions*, piety is all the fashion, and no calls are received. Towards dinner-time I am glad to rest half an hour from boredom at the Princess Obolenski's; she is so attractive that I ask for your indulgence to do homage to her now and then; she goes to Moscow to-morrow. I have found many lovely women besides. A right pretty Frau von Korssakoff has already gone—she, too, to Moscow. Our politics put me out of humor; we are only driftwood, blown about without object on our own waters by strange winds; and what mean winds, and ill-smelling! But how seldom people have any wills of their own in so estimable a nation as ours. We like the rôle of Leporello, and Austria that of Don Juan.

I have an idea I advised you to sell the old bronze chandeliers; you had better not do it, if they are not already sold. . . . Yesterday, at the house of the Spanish Duke of Ossuna, I saw some bronzes beside which our poorest could hold their own; the metal seems to be very dear here. This grandee showed us, besides, photographs of all possible fine castles and gardens which he owns in Spain, Italy, Belgium, and Sardinia, and which he himself knows only through the pictures. He has an income of millions, the biggest name in Spain, and lives here on the frozen Neva, lonely and unmarried, in a vast, rambling house, worth twelve thousand rix-dollars rent, furnished,

and has no longing for the shade of his chestnut forests. . . .

*April 20th.*

The Neva is just breaking up. As usual, Gortsch served me with a summons, and afterwards I went to take a look. Thank Heaven! Farewell. I must hurry to catch the mail. I have had to write ciphers and telegrams for some hours. May everything dear and good be yours and the children's!

Your most faithful      ✱ V. B.

PETERSBURG, *April 28, '59.*

MY HEART,—Three days and three nights I have written, and not to you! The chasseur is fumbling mustachios and sword in his impatience; but two words to you he must take along, nevertheless. I am well, somewhat overworked. I have taken a house for a year, Stenbock, of which you have a drawing. . . . War, then (though not quite as yet); Austria has granted two days more, but the troops are marching, and now perhaps they are firing on each other. As God wills. To-day, with Czar and parade, we buried—or, rather, celebrated the funeral rites of one old Prince Hohenlohe. I stayed with Gortschakoff in the church, with its black hangings, after everybody went out, and sat on the catafalque and velvet death's-head cover, talking politics—that is, working over them, not just chatting. The preacher had talked of the psalm about life's transitoriness (grass withered by the wind), and we planned and plotted as though one were never going to die. He is fumbling again. A thousand greetings, and luck to your trip; if not before the 4th, then this will find you still in Frankfort. Kiss the children and all.

YOUR MOST FAITHFUL,



THE LOVE LETTERS OF BISMARCK [MAY,

ZARSKOE-SELO, *May 5, '59.*

MY DEAR HEART!—I have wanted every day to write you so as to greet you in Berlin; but it is again almost time for the chasseur to start; I dictate to Klüber from breakfast until four o'clock; then I take a walk; in the evening I do nothing more, because it tires my eyes; the evening does not begin, however, until after nine; until then one can see without a light. With three cipher despatches that come and three that go, we never pass a day independent of dictation. In short, I am glad to find this free moment here in the Petersburg Potsdam, where I have arrived at the anniversary reception of the Dowager Czarina's baptism at eleven o'clock, and am not needed until after twelve. I am sitting in a very stately room, with ladies' knick-knacks of the time of Alexander I.; before me a garden laid out in straight lines, with fine leafless lindens, sunshine, and some beautiful plastering of snow on the grass-plots, which fell freshly yesterday. Klüber is walking to and fro behind me, unhappy over the wrinkling and riding-up of his lace-trimmed breeches. I am smoking paper cigars and using all sorts of agate and bronze knick-knacks as ash-receivers, in my favorite way. This morning early I received your last Frankfort letter, full of woe at parting from birds, flowers, and people. What good does bothering and pothering do? What must be, must be. . . . Now it is getting to be time for me to wash away this tobacco smell, for it will probably cling about my uniform. Her Majesty, the Czarina mamma, does not like it at all, so I will do what I can with eau de cologne and finish these lines in Petersburg. I shall probably not get back there before evening.

PETERSBURG, *May 6, '59.*

I did come earlier, after all, because I cut the Marshal's table, ate at Versen's (husband of Elise Rauch) a good and lively dinner, was at Mr. Pickens's in the evening, the American ambassador, a real Pickwick, exceedingly funny, but hardly amusing. This morning I wrote a letter to Alvensleben, then the parade, about forty thousand men, Circassians, Georgians, Tartars, all possible queer peoples. The whole thing lasted nearly three hours, dust and cold wind, otherwise clear weather; the Czar devoted himself to me as particularly as though he had got up the parade for my benefit. As they marched by he took me forward to a place beside him, and explained to me every separate troop, and where they stood and recruited, and who commanded them. . . . Farewell, my dear heart; I must dress. We are three hundred and ninety miles nearer to each other, anyway. To see the Neva, with its boat traffic, is a pleasure that I am looking forward to for the children; we have it under the window; the Stettin steamers moor there, too. Love to Oscar, Malle, children, and write how you feel about the life at court. . . . Kiss all the children, and give them sweet oranges for me.

Your most faithful

V. B.

PETERSBURG, *May 7, '59.*

MY DEAR HEART,—In the courier-and-parade hurry-scurry of yesterday I did not say a single word about how I enjoyed the children's picture, though it lay right before me; but it did not seem to occur to me that it was anything unusual; I thought I had had it for years. It is splendid, and I must praise all three especially for keeping so still—the two older ones even their eyes. Yesterday my head

was so full of war and peace, Circassians, Cossacks, Tartars, grand princes, and chasseurs, that it is only to-day, after sleeping myself out, that I can collect my thoughts. I dreamed in the night of bedsteads with high legs, short and with white stripes! In free moments my thoughts are entirely with your journey and with our house arrangements. . . . You must break up at Reinfeld by the time of the Fête of St. John at latest, for I should like to have you here by the 1st of August, so the children can get acclimated before the cold nights come. . . . It is hard to make use of more than one servant here who does not speak Russian. In the salons hardly a word but French is heard, but as soon as one sets foot over the threshold one is flooded with foreign tones, and rarely finds anybody who understands a syllable of German, and still less French.

Your most faithful

v. B.

PETERSBURG, May 14, '59.

MY BELOVED HEART,—Thank Heaven your letter of the 6th arrived yesterday; I had begun to feel anxious, since I could not find in the *Kreuz Zeitung* news of your arrival in Berlin, and still supposed that you had started on the 3d. How sorry I am for you about all the bother of packing and sending things off, and about the donkeys that have made things hard for you, besides. You shall now get thoroughly rested from all that and pick up again. . . . Please write me in greatest haste in what form my second telegraphic despatch reached you three weeks ago—not the birthday one, but the following, for which I had to pay eight rubles and divers kopecks, in order to tell you not to buy anything, consequently no carved furniture, and now I see from your letter that I owe it entirely

to your mother-wit that we have not acquired this *embarras de richesse*! Do send me the despatch in the original, if you, by any chance, have it at hand, so that I can teach the telegraphers here their manners or recover my money. . . .

A right joyful surprise was your photo, a bit strained, thinking of packing and visits, but still your dear face, not seen for three months. The one hundred and thirty calls were an excess of virtue. . . .

Your most faithful

V. B.

I had something I wanted to add in closing, but in the hubbub it has escaped me, and I cannot remember, except that I wanted to tell you something very nice.

PETERSBURG, Monday, May 16, '59.

. . . If you have really, by early this morning, made some progress towards Schönhausen, then I shall begin to believe in dreams; just before waking, somewhat late, I had quite a vivid dream that you embraced, in a lively and affectionate fashion, a woman at Schönhausen, who was dressed in the costume of the place. . . . I already have my third coachman. The people drink so that one cannot trust one's own horses to them. They are exemplarily virtuous for thirteen days out of fourteen, and then one finds them, when waiting for a carriage, lying as if dead under the horses, head in the water-bucket, quite useless for the day. . . . It does not get dark at all any more—towards twelve still a sunset sky; to-day I came home early towards one, and the morning light was already full rosy, with twilight in the streets. . . . It is fortunate that I have lots of work, always something to do, always in a hurry, writing or company or hunting; other-

THE LOVE LETTERS OF BISMARCK [MAY,

wise the feeling of loneliness in this hotel asylum would have long ago made me sick with yearning. . . . Much love and God's blessing. By all means let the children go to Schönhausen.

Your most faithful

v. B.

PETERSBURG, *May 28, '59.*

MY DEAR HEART,— . . . The spring came on here like an explosion. In forty-eight hours, from the condition of budding twigs to that of a thick green curtain. It is very hot now, with occasional storms, and I have no summer stuff with me, also no beds and no cooking utensils, and must move into Stenbock's in two weeks, where both are lacking. What could I buy of that sort of thing that would not be superfluous afterwards? Bedsteads are there, cook, too, but copper and linen and beds! I should have cried out before about my need of these things, but where was my letter to find you? You woman without a date! The things will hardly come before July, as I have as yet had no notice at all from Rotterdam of their arrival there. Farewell—heartily well. Boat will not wait. Lots of love, parents and children.

Your

v. B.

PETERSBURG, *May 31, '59.*

(No letter on June 1st either.)

MY DEAR HEART,—Since finding that the mail-boat that has just come in, too, brings no letter from you, I feel quite downcast, and shall be ill if you keep on forgetting me this way in my hot and lonely hotel room. In the entire month of May I had two letters from you, the first from Frankfort, just at the beginning, the other long one

from Berlin on the 18th; and this boat brings everything that could leave Stettin up to the evening of the 28th. I do not even know whether you are in Berlin, or where else, as your last letter contained nothing about plans for travelling or stopping, and I wanted so very, very much to follow you on your way with my thoughts, and to be able to write to you at definite places. I know very well that it is hard to find time to write when one is travelling, or when one is finding old Pomeranian friends again, but surely I might be allowed a couple of lines during the week. If I were not to write at all, as long as I was in a hurry and rush, then you would have had no letter from me since Berlin. Think how much it meant to you to receive a few hasty lines of news from me from any one of the stations on my way, and then consider how much lonelier and more in need of news I am here, in comparison with you; you had children and the Beckers and Arnims, and I don't know whom besides, while I sit the entire day at my desk, or with people who do not understand German, and from nine to eleven in the evening I ride, chiefly alone, rarely with Klüber. When I have not dined with him, we seldom come together again in the evening. It does not get dark any more at all; when going out into company at eleven one can read in the open air, and it is the same thing returning homeward at one o'clock through the still inhabited streets. I hardly go to bed before three, and then it is like day. . . . The heat is oppressive—100° to 120° in the sun; I never get into the shade, as I have the sunny side, and when I drive in an open carriage, I cannot look out for shade. Dust and great drought; everything longs for rain. Agreeable acquaintances are leaving, more and more. . . . Farewell, my beloved one. Love to all. And do not worry me any longer with lack of news. Your most faithful V. B.



PETERSBURG, *June 4, '59.*

MY DEAR HEART,—At last, day before yesterday, came the long-yearned-for news from you, with the reassuring post-mark, Stolp. I could not go to sleep at all in the evening, because of anxious pictures of my imagination, whose scenes were all the stopping-places between Berlin and Reinfeld. . . . Yesterday I dined at the Czarina's, in Zarske, where I found the Grand Princess Marie, who could tell me at least that she had seen you in Berlin, and that you were all right. On the way back the Czar met me at the station, and took me into his coupé—very conspicuous here for a civilian with such an old hat as I generally wear. In the evening I was, of course, on the islands, on a lively dark-brown horse, and drank tea there with a nice, old, white-haired Countess Stroganoff. The lilac, I must tell you, has flowered here as beautifully as in Frankfort, and the laburnum, too; and the nightingales warble so happily that it is hard to find a spot on the islands where one does not hear them. In the city, during these days, we had such unremitting heat as we almost never have at home. The captain of the *Eagle* told me that the temperature in southern Pomerania was actually refreshing in comparison; with such short nights, too, the morning brings no real coolness, and I could ride or drive about for hours in the mysterious gloaming which hovers at midnight over the surface of the water, if the increasing brightness did not give warning that another day is waiting with its work and care, and that sleep demands its rights beforehand. Since I have had the drosky, in which there is too little room for an interpreter, I am making, to the smirking delight of Dmitri, the coachman, progress in Russian, since there is nothing left for me to do but to speak it *tant bien que mal*. I am sorry that you have not

been able to watch with me the sudden awakening of spring here; as if it had suddenly occurred to her that she had overslept her time, she is putting on, in twenty-four hours, her entire green dress, from head to foot. . . . This whole preparation for war is somewhat premature, and is causing us unnecessary expense. I hope we shall come to our senses finally before setting all Europe on fire, for the sake of obliging some little princes, and, at our own cost, helping Austria in glory out of her embarrassment. We cannot allow Austria either to be annihilated or, through brilliant victory, to be strengthened in her feeling of self-confidence and to make us the footstool of her greatness. But there is plenty of time for either case before we take the plunge, and many a piece of Lombard water can be dyed red, for things will not go forward so easily as hitherto when the Austrians have once placed themselves in their line of forts, as they should have done at the first. . . .

It is a misfortune that I always write to you in a steaming hurry; now the foxy face of the chancery servant, who is in the police pay, besides, is before me again already, and is hurrying me up, and everything I wanted to say is shrivelling before the fellow, who is useful, however. I was just thinking of much more that I wanted to write, and now I do not know anything except that I should like to beat him. . . . In the greatest love,

Your most faithful

V. B.

MOSCOW, *June 6, '59.*

A sign of life, at least, I want to send you from here, my dear, while I am waiting for the samovar, and a young Russian in a red shirt is struggling, with vain attempts, to light a fire; he blows and sighs, but it will not burn.

After complaining so much before about the scorching heat I waked up to-day between Twer and here, and thought I was dreaming when I saw the land and its fresh green covered far and wide with snow. Nothing surprises me any more, so when I could no longer be in doubt about the fact, I turned quietly on my other side to continue sleeping and rolling on, although the play of the green-and-white colors in the morning red was not without charm. I do not know whether the snow still lies about Twer; here it is all melted, and a cool, gray rain is drizzling down on the sheet of roofs. Russia certainly has a perfect right to claim green as her color. Of the four hundred and fifty miles hither I slept away one hundred and eighty, but of the other two hundred and seventy every hand's-breadth was green, of all shades. Cities and villages, especially houses, with the exception of the stations, I did not notice; bushy forests, chiefly birches, cover swamps and hills, fine growth of grass under them, long meadows between. So it goes for fifty, one hundred, one hundred and fifty miles. I don't remember to have noticed any fields, or any heather or sand; lonely grazing cows or horses waken in one now and then the conjecture that there are people, too, in the neighborhood. Moscow looks from above like a corn-field, the soldiers green, the furniture green, and I have no doubt that the eggs lying before me were laid by green hens. You will want to know how I happen to be here; I have asked myself the same question, and presently received the answer that variety is the spice of life. The truth of this profound observation is especially obvious when one has been living for ten weeks in a sunny hotel-room, looking out upon stone pavements. Besides, one's senses become somewhat blunted to the joys of moving, if repeated often in a short time, so I de-

terminated to forego these same pleasures, handed over all papers to Klüber, gave Engel my keys, explained that I should take up my lodgings in the Stenbock house in a week, and rode to the Moscow station. That was yesterday, twelve noon, and to-day early, at eight, I alighted here at the Hôtel de France. . . . It lies in the nature of this people to harness slowly and drive fast. I ordered my carriage two hours ago, and to all inquiries which I have been making about every ten minutes during the last hour and a half they say (Russian), "*Ssitschàss*," ("immediately"), with unshaken and amiable calm, but there the matter ends. You know my exemplary patience in waiting, but everything has its limits; hunting comes later, and horses and carriages are broken in the bad roads, so that one finally takes to walking. While writing I have drunk three glasses of tea and made way with a number of eggs; the attempts at heating up have also been so entirely successful that I feel the need of getting some fresh air. I should shave myself for very impatience if I had a mirror, in default of which, however, I shall send a greeting to my dear Tata, with yesterday's stubble beard. It is very virtuous really that my first thought is always of you whenever I have a moment free, and you should make an example of that fact. Very rambling is this city, and especially foreign-looking, with its churches and green roofs and countless cupolas, quite different from Amsterdam, but the two are the most original cities that I know. Not a single German conductor has any idea of the luggage that can be slipped into one of these coupés; not a Russian without two real, covered head-cushions, children in baskets, and masses of provisions of every sort, although they eat five big meals at the stations on the way, breakfast at two, dinner five, tea seven, supper ten;

it's only four, to be sure, but enough for the short time. I was complimented by an invitation into a sleeping-coupé, where I was worse off than in my easy-chair; it is a wonder to me that so much fuss is made over one night.

MOSCOW, *June 8th.*

This city is really, for a city, the most beautiful and original that there is; the environs are pleasant, not pretty, not unsightly; but the view from above out of the Kremlin, over this circle of houses with green roofs, gardens, churches, towers of the most extraordinary shape and color, most of them green or red or light blue, generally crowned on top by a colossal golden bulb, usually five



or more on one church, and surely one thousand towers! Anything more strangely beautiful than all this, lighted by slanting sunset rays, cannot be seen. The weather is clear again, and I should stay here some days longer if rumors of a big battle in Italy were not going about, which may result in lots of diplomatic work, so that I must get back to my post. The house in which I am writing is wonderful enough, really; one of the few that have outlived 1812—old, thick walls, as in Schönhäusen, Oriental architecture, Moorish, large rooms, almost entirely occupied by the chancery officers, who administer, or maladminister, Jussupow's estates. He, his wife, and I have the one livable wing in the midst of them. Lots of love.

Your most faithful

v. B.

PETERSBURG, *June 25, '59.*

MY DEAR HEART,—I should not have been satisfied with the hasty lines I wrote you a week ago, and should have written again some days sooner, but I have had at last to pay some tribute to the climate. Lumbago, in unusual perfection, seized upon my limbs from various sides at once, and though in the beginning I would not recognize it, it finally made itself so evident that I soon lay fettered, or, rather, sat, for lying down was not always an easy matter when these nomadically inclined tormentors chose their seat in my back, instead of in legs and ribs. I have risen from the milder mustard remedies to those of cupping and the Spanish fly, and in their management of these operations have found the Russians not quite free from the savagery which my political sympathy for them had been glad to reckon among the inventions of prejudice. I believe now in the knout, although I have seen none as yet. Now I am rejoicing in the free use of my limbs, but I am covered, like Lazarus, with wounds and boils; however, that will soon heal, and I will not embitter my thanks to God for my recovery with complaints about this. This rheumatism, as you know, is not dangerous, but very painful; and one cold followed another here, excessive night work, political vexation, everything had contributed to stomach trouble, too, and I am still on a diet, with a passion for fresh compote, which, at the price of one and a half rubles for the pound of cherries, and three and a half for the pound of strawberries, is ruinous for the father of a family. But after already eating cherries here three months ago at twelve rubles, and grapes at I don't know what, though not at my own expense, and after being served constantly since then at every dinner with everything that the year produces in



any one of its months, I think I will not deny myself these "rublish preserves." . . . I was dreadfully homesick for you and all about you when I had to lie here so quiet and solitary, and whenever I looked at the pictures of you and the children I felt doubly forsaken. One pampers himself then like a house-dog, and it was the first occasion since I left you in Frankfort that the restless disquietude of business and court life had spared me time for relaxing thought. I am thinking more than ever of the possibility of giving up this driving existence, at a suitable opportunity. Who knows how long we shall still live together in this world, and who knows what kind of times we may see here? A man becomes a stranger to God, his own family, and himself, and the keys of his soul are so out of tune that he has not a note left among them that could give pleasure to a single person. This life is lacking in what I might call the Sunday element—not a Frankfort, but a Kolziglow Sunday—a drop of rest in this feverish confusion, a bit of holiday-time in this workshop, where lies and passion hammer restlessly at the anvil of human ignorance. We say to ourselves, to be sure, that the world is going God's ways, and after thirty years it's all the same to us, perhaps even after one, whether things happened this way or that; but if we try to hammer, too, we lose our breath, unless (like many of our friends) we provide ourselves with a neat-looking hammer of pasteboard and a mild little Offenbach heart of pressed leather. You must bring both along with you for me; here at Stenbock I haven't yet found them, although there is lots of wonderful furniture here, and the place for ours will be scant. . . . Farewell, my sweetheart, and do not worry over all these things I have been grumbling to you about; with God's help everything will come out well, and I shall be

well and happy with you. Much love to parents and children.

Your most faithful

VON B.

PETERHOF, June 28, '59.

MY DEAR HEART,—From this date you see that I am on the heights again. I came here early to-day to take leave of “Ssudarina Matuschka,” Czarina Mammy, who goes to sea to-morrow. To me she seems to have something motherly in her lovely naturalness, and I can talk to her as unreservedly as though I had known her from childhood. She talked to me a long time to-day about many things; on a balcony with a view over the green, knitting at a white-and-red woollen shawl, with long wooden needles, she lay dressed in black, in a *chaise-longue*. I should have liked to listen for hours to her deep voice and honest laughing and chiding, so much at home did I feel. I had come in a dress-coat for a couple of hours only, but when she finally said she did not want to say good-bye to me yet, but I had probably a tremendous amount to do, I declared, “Not in the least”; and then she said, “Stay, then, until I leave to-morrow.” I was glad to take the invitation as a command, for it’s charming here, and so stony in Petersburg. Imagine the heights of Oliva and Zoppot all dressed up with pleasure-grounds and with a dozen castles between, with terraces, fountains, and lakes, with shady walks and lawns, all the way to the sea, blue sky and warm sun, with white clouds, and out beyond the green sea of tree-tops the real, blue sea, with sails and gulls; nothing has done me so much good for a long time. The Czar and Gortschakoff come in a few hours; then, I suppose, some business will break in upon the idyl; but, thank Heaven, it looks somewhat more peaceful in the world, in

spite of our preparations for the field, and I do not need to trouble myself so much about resolutions that I could not approve. I have come to feel sorry for the Austrian soldiers; they must be led too stupidly, to have met with so many defeats—on the 24th again! The French will become over-confident. It is a lesson for Rechberg and his Ministers which they, in their obduracy, will not take to heart at all. We should undoubtedly have stood by them, if we had had even enough confidence in them to believe that they would not betray us while we were fighting for them. I should fear France less than Austria from the moment we took the war upon ourselves. . . . Have Schmidt\* bring along what he needs for the children in the way of teaching things, books, etc., etc. There is nothing of the kind here. Dearest love to old and young and middle-aged. Farewell, my darling.

Your most faithful

VON B.

PETERSBURG, *July 2, '59.*

MY DEAR HEART,—I received your letter of the 25th yesterday, and you will probably get to-morrow the one that I sent to Stettin on Wednesday with the Dowager Czarina. My homesick heart follows its course with yearning thoughts; it was such charming clear weather and fresh winds when we escorted her Highness on board in Peterhof that I should have liked to leap on the ship, in uniform and without baggage, and go along with her. Since then the heat has grown worse, about the temperature of a freely watered palm-house, and my lack of summer materials is making itself decidedly felt. I

\*Tutor.

go about in the rooms in my shirt alone, as the dear blue dressing-gown is too narrow, even now at six o'clock in the morning. A courier wakened me half an hour ago, with his war and peace, and I cannot sleep any more now, although I did not get to bed until towards two. Our politics are drifting more and more into the Austrian wake, and as soon as we have fired a shot on the Rhine, then it's all over with the war between Italy and Austria, and, instead of that, a war between France and Prussia will take the stage, in which Austria, after we have taken the burden from her shoulders, will stand by us or will not stand by us, just as her own interests dictate. She will certainly not suffer us to play a gloriously victorious rôle. It is quite remarkable that in such crises Catholic ministers always hold the reins of our destiny—Radowitz once before, now Hohenzollern, who just now has the predominant influence, and is in favor of war. I look very darkly into the future; our troops are not better than the Austrian, because they only serve half as long; and the German troops, on whose support we reckon, are for the most part quite wretched, and, if things go ill with us, their leaders will fall away from us like dry leaves in the wind. But God, who can hold up and throw down Prussia, and the world, knows why these things must be, and we will not embitter ourselves against the land in which we were born, and against the authorities for whose enlightenment we pray. After thirty years, perhaps much sooner, it will be a small matter to us how things stand with Prussia and Austria, if only the mercy of God and the deserving of Christ remain to our souls. I opened the Scriptures last evening, at random, so as to rid my anxious heart of politics, and my eye lighted immediately on the 5th verse of the 110th Psalm. As God wills—

it is all, to be sure, only a question of time, nations and people, folly and wisdom, war and peace; they come and go like waves of water, and the sea remains. What are our states and their power and honor before God, except as ant-hills and bee-hives which the hoof of an ox tramples down, or fate, in the form of a honey-farmer, overtakes? . . . Farewell, my sweetheart, and learn to experience life's folly in sadness; there is nothing in this world but hypocrisy and jugglery, and whether fever or grape-shot shall bear away this mass of flesh, fall it must, sooner or later, and then such a resemblance will appear between a Prussian and an Austrian, if they are of the same size, like Schrech and Rechberg, for example, that it will be difficult to distinguish between them; the stupid and the clever, too, properly reduced to the skeleton state, look a good deal like each other. Patriotism for a particular country is destroyed by this reflection, but we should have to despair in any case, even now, were it linked with our salvation. Farewell once more, with love to parents and children. How impatient I am to see them! As soon as *Vriendschap*—so our vessel is called—is in sight, I shall telegraph. With love, as always,                      Your most faithful                      VON B.

LAZIENKI, *October 17, '59.*

MY DEAR HEART, — Here I am at Lazienki. This morning I was looking in the first Polish station for the ticket-office, so as to be registered for this place, when a benevolent fate in the shape of a white-bearded Russian general seized me (Prittivitz is the angel's name), and before I could really recover my senses my passport was wrested from the police and my luggage from the custom-house officials, and I was transplanted from the way-train

to the special of the Prince of Orange, and was sitting, a cigar of this charming young gentleman in my mouth, between three Dutchmen and two Russians in a royal drawing-room car, and, after a good dinner in Petrikau or Piotskoff, arrived at the station here, where the Emperor was awaiting the Prince, and where I was separated by the gilded crowd from Alexander and baggage. My carriage was waiting; I had to get in, and my questions, which I called out in various languages, as to where I was to lodge and as to my wish to notify Alexander Raymond of the place, died away in the clatter of the wagon with which two excited stallions were galloping me off into the night. It must have been half an hour that I was driven in wild haste through the darkness, and now I am sitting here in uniform with the ribbon of the order which we all donned at the last station, tea near me, a mirror before me, and I don't know a thing beyond the fact that I am in the Stanislaus August pavilion, in Lazienki; I don't know where that is, and live in the hope that Alexander, with a somewhat more comfortable costume, will soon discover traces of me. Judging from the rushing noise, there seem to be high trees or fountains in front of my window; except for a great many people in court-livery, I haven't discovered any human beings about. . . . The Emperor comes early on the 23d to Breslau, stays there till a week from to-day, and then, my angel, with two days' delay, I shall come to you. . . . With hearty love,

Your most faithful

V. B.

LAZIENKI, October 19, '59.

MY BELOVED,—I can only tell you simply that I am well. Yesterday I was *en grandeur* all day: breakfast



with the Emperor, then long audience, just as gracious as in P., and very sympathetic; calls, dinner at his Majesty's theatre in the evening, very good ballet, and all boxes full of pretty women. Now I have slept splendidly, the tea is standing on the table, and after I have drunk it I go out driving. Early on the 23d the Emperor comes to Breslau; early on the 25th we shall probably go to Berlin. The aforementioned tea, which I just drank, consisted really not only of tea, but of coffee, six eggs, three kinds of meat, pastry, and one bottle of Bordeaux, and from the breach that I made in it early in the morning you would see that my journey did not do me any harm. The wind is blowing here over the Vistula as though giving vent to its wrath, and is rummaging in the chestnuts and lindens that surround me, so that the yellow leaves whirl against the windows; but here, within, with double windows, tea, and the thought of you and the children, it is easy to smoke my cigar in cosey comfort. Unfortunately all comfort in the world has its precise limits, and I am only waiting till the people in the next room, where I hear Alexander's voice gayly asking for a corkscrew, have finished their breakfast, to throw myself into a carriage and to drive first to various castles and castellets, and then into town. Eulenburg\* has just been announced. Farewell. Lots of love to all.

Your most faithful                      V. B.

BERLIN, Wednesday, *April* 25, '60.

"No hope is realized; in the young man's," etc., etc. I have just come out from my audience of leave No. 4; but it

\* Consul-General at Warsaw.

is not the last. Kindly but imperative request that I remain "a few days" longer, and regards to you.

Yesterday I dined with old Fr. Lottum. I have now discovered that new port wine is very good for me. In the evening I was with Agnes Pourtalès until twelve. I had really hoped to leave to-morrow, and am now somewhat bewildered and depressed. My longing grows with every glimpse of the sun. Give hearty love to old and young, and especially to dad.

Your most faithful

V. B.

The sparrows are sitting, with ruffled feathers, on the balcony railing, and thinking, "Where is Nannie with the Zwieback?"

BERLIN, Friday.

(Postmarked *April 27, '60*)

As in old days, my heart, I write to you once again from the Chamber—to-day the Upper House. . . . My longing to get away from here is getting to be a disease with me; homesickness for the northeast, and ideal pictures of home-life on the Neva infest my dreams. How long, O God, how long? The flight of marble stairs, the green-room, and the boats on the Spree are unendurable to me. Farewell. God be with you all, and bring us together soon.

Your most faithful

V. B.

B., Friday.

(Postmarked BERLIN, *May 4, '60.*)

I have sent you envelopes to-day, my dearest heart. If there are not fifty, or if they are not the right ones, then we are defrauded, but they cost only ten silver groschen. Last evening I was at the Regent's. I was complaining

about the cold, windy weather. "And do you want to go to Petersburg in this weather?" he put in. I said it wasn't any worse there than here, and a person must live somewhere, hence my wish to leave. Then Prince Fr. Wilh. said: "I sha'n't say good-bye to you any more, however, for I have done so four times already, and you are still here." Thereupon I cast at his father a glance which meant, "There, you hear it from your own son," but just as I did so he turned away and left us standing there. Those are bad prospects, and yet I cannot say anything to your Reinfeld questions of to-day, but will await the reply to an official inquiry about my leaving, which I sent in yesterday to the Ministry.

The delegates had a sharp quarrel to-day. Moritz fell upon Schleinitz, good in thought, weak in expression, but courageous. It would only lead to their suspecting me of it and saying to me, "Sir, just clear off to your post!" I make myself as disagreeable as possible. I must go to Oscar's now, or they'll die of hunger there.

BERLIN, Monday.

(Postmarked *May 7, '60.*)

. . . I am sitting here on the balcony cliff, like the Lorelei, and I see the Spree skipper pass through the lock, but I am not singing and am not taking the trouble to comb my hair. I think I am getting terribly old in this hotel; the seasons and the tribes of travellers and waiters pass by before me, and I stay on in the little green-room, feed the sparrows, and lose more hair every day. . . . The wheel of time has forgotten me, like the Red-beard in the Kyffhäuser, and I wait and wait for things that never come. After three days' vain efforts I met Schleinitz yesterday, accidentally, at a dinner at Redern's; my request that the

Countess Perpoucher and I should be either freed from suspense, or else temporarily married to each other for the rest of the time of waiting, seemed to him just, and he was willing to help the Countess, at least, by giving Perpoucher\* leave of absence, and handing the business over to Croy again, as there wasn't anything special to do. I declared, rather dryly, that I should prefer going away to enduring any longer this "lagging and dragging torment of suspense." He then begged me to wait quietly "a few days" longer, and hinted vaguely at important changes. I told him that I had no desire for such a thing; I wanted to remain what I was; let them send me to Frankfort, if they wanted, and then the anxieties now weighing upon him could be lightened. "Would you really—if it were offered?" "Yes." "But Olympia?" "Well, I can't marry her, but my house in Petersburg shall be free to her if we exchange." Therewith the conversation ended. The fact that Schleinitz is at one with Auerswald, Hohenzollern, and the Regent, in wanting to keep me here, proves that no decisions have been made even yet in the most important matters. The thought of living in Berlin is not agreeable to me; if I cannot go to Frankfort, then my first choice would be Petersburg, and then London or Naples, rather than here. But as God wills; it is already too much that I have expressed the wish to go to Frankfort. . . .

Your most faithful                      V. B.

BERLIN, Saturday.

(Postmarked May 12, '60.)

I am well, my heart; sending, herewith, pictures, gloves, lorgnette. Upon my further attempt to get off, irritability,

\*Count Perpoucher was *chargé d'affaires* in Petersburg.

and command to remain, *sans phrase*. So for the present I can do nothing but grumble inwardly. Thousand greetings. Thiergarten my comfort. Nightingales charming; green, but very hot. Your most faithful V. B.

BERLIN, May 17, '60.

MY DEAR HEART,—This is Ascension-Day—that is all very fine, but, unfortunately, not Departure-Day, and that is very sad. I am waiting in quiet resignation, and reckoning, dejectedly, that I still have a whole week before the session ends. For almost two weeks I haven't spoken a word of business, or, at any rate, business of my office, and for a week longer it will be just the same. Couldn't I have been with you quietly for three weeks? I am very melancholy over this wasting of the most beautiful time in the year, especially when I say to myself beforehand that no substantial result of any kind will come of it. Feeding sparrows, Röder and Harry appearing as usual, dinner at Oscar's—all just as before you left, only no more heating, and the bare bushes in the green plot have turned into mountains of white blossoms. I called on the Countess Perpoucher yesterday, and found her in mild despair; she is going off with the children to some watering-place without waiting for her husband. The children wrote me very nicely to-day; thank them for it, and tell them to read their letters over carefully before they send them, so as to discover where they have dropped words or written nonsense, and correct them. That much time they must be willing to give it. I am going to the Thiergarten—my only amusement. Only to-day it will be very full. Farewell.

Your most faithful V. B.

Rooce challenged Vincken; but I hope we can smooth



PRINCESS BISMARCK

1885





the matter over. Really, this time there is no reason for it; we ourselves say much more aggravating things to other Ministers; business must bring that in its train, and in every Parliament there are churls, but one doesn't always shoot them down right away. Love to all.

BERLIN, May 17, '62.

MY DEAR HEART,—At last I have had news of you—yesterday evening—and am very thankful that God's gracious protection has accompanied you and kept you through all dangers. . . . You have behaved with courage and decision, like Joanna of Orleans, but still it makes me rather anxious to have you travel without a servant. The exertion of going to Wygode, and the care connected with it, cannot have done you any good, in your poor, feeble health. Our dear parents will nurse you into better weight again. Mother has probably scolded well at my handing you over in such a thin condition. I am thankful that you are in the haven. Our future is just as uncertain as in Petersburg; Berlin is more in the foreground; I do nothing for and nothing against it, but I shall drink myself tipsy when I once have my Paris credentials in my pocket. London is entirely out of the question for the present, but everything may be changed again. The King is very gracious, talks over everything with me, except future ambassadorships. . . . Hearty love.

Your most faithful

V. B.

BERLIN, May 21, '62.

*Frau von Bismarck, Schönhausen, Reinfeld, near Old Pomerania:*

MY DEAR HEART,—Your letter came yesterday, to my delight, with the Wentzel enclosure, which I will at-

tend to. There is still no decision made here. Perhaps Heydt's ambition will save me; he wants to be minister-president himself; besides, I do not wish for this position unless I have the foreign office with it, and Bernstorff wants to stay, or to hold London open for himself, too. Saturday I shall have been here two weeks; then I shall explode and demand my dismissal. . . . Yesterday I was with the widowed Queen an hour and a half; very amiable in sadness, reminiscence, and tears. The photograph in mourning is not in the least like her. I was in Sans Souci again for the first time since the autumn of '57, and many pictures of the past rose up before me out of the blossoming bushes. I am engaged every hour of the day, without really having anything to do, and necessity for calls just as bad as in Petersburg. Farewell, beloved angel. Much love.

Your most faithful

V. B.

BERLIN, *May 23, '62.*

MY DEAR HEART,—You have already seen in the papers that I have been appointed to Paris. I am very glad of it, but the shadow remains in the background. I was already as good as caught for the ministry; my disapproval of the affair over the electorate of Hesse and the indecision of Bernstorff have set me free for the present. I asked definitely and officially for an appointment, or leave to depart, and three hours later received my appointment, as Bernstorff could not decide so quickly about his resignation. I leave as soon as I can get away, to-morrow or day after, for Paris. . . . I am not coming to you beforehand, because I want first to take possession in Paris; perhaps they will discover another minister-president when I am once out of their sight. I am not going to Schönhausen,

either, for fear they might keep me tied down here again. I rode about as major for four hours yesterday, so I received my appointment to Paris in the saddle. The chestnut mare is here, and is my joy and relaxation in the Thiergarten; I shall take her with me. The bears left yesterday for Frankfort. I have both hands full to make it possible to get off. The next letter, I hope, from Paris; write me there, "Ambassade de Prusse, Rue de Lille." Farewell, my sweetheart. A thousand greetings.

Your most faithful

V. B.

BERLIN, *May 25, '62.*

MY DEAR HEART,—You write very seldom, and without doubt you have more time for it than I. I have hardly had a really good night's sleep since I have been here. Yesterday I went out at eight in the morning, came back in haste to the house five times to change my clothes; at eight went to Potsdam again to see Prince Frederick Charles, and back here again at eleven. To-day, at four, I have just had my first free minute, and am using it to heap this fiery coal on your black head. I expect to leave for Paris to-morrow, at latest Tuesday; whether for long Heaven only knows; perhaps only for months or weeks. They are all conspiring here to make me stay, and I shall be very thankful when I have gained a resting-place on the Seine, and have a porter who will admit no one to me for several days. . . . I don't know yet whether I can send our chattels to Paris at all; for it's possible I shall be called back here before they arrive. I am attempting flight, rather than taking up a new abode. I have had to be very severe in order to get away, for the present, from this hotel life of procrastination. I am ready for all that God may

send, and bewail only being separated from you without being able to calculate on the time when we shall see each other again. If there is any prospect of my staying in Paris till winter, then, I think, you will follow me soon, and we will settle down comfortably, even though it be for a short time. It will have to be settled in July whether I return before the end of the summer session, or remain longer in Paris, and long enough to bring you all over. I shall do what I can to bring about the latter result, and, anyway, I should like to have you come to Paris, if only for a short time, and without any regular establishment, so that you may have seen it. There was a grand military dinner yesterday, where I figured as major — parade beforehand. The chestnut mare is my daily delight in the Thiergarten, but not quite enough for military purposes. Now I am going to a farewell dinner at Malle's with numerous friends; at last a free noon. Give love and kisses to big and small, and write to me.

Your most faithful

v. B.

PARIS, *May 31*, '62.

MY DEAR HEART,—Only a few lines in the press of business to tell you I am well, but very lonely, with a view out over the green, in this dull, rainy weather, while the bumble-bees hum and the sparrows twitter. Grand audience to-morrow. It's vexatious that I have to buy linen, towels, table-cloths, and sheets. . . . Farewell. Hearty love, and write!

Your most faithful

v. B.

PARIS, *June 1*, '62.

MY DEAR HEART,—The Emperor received me to-day, and I handed over my credentials; he received me kindly,

is looking well, has grown somewhat stouter, but by no means fat and aged, as he generally is in caricatures. The Empress is still one of the most beautiful women I know, in spite of Petersburg; she has, if anything, grown more beautiful in the past five years. The whole affair was official, ceremonial; I was taken back in court-carriage with master of ceremonies, etc. Next time I shall probably have a private audience. I long for business, for I don't know what to do with myself. To-day I dined alone, the young gentlemen were out; the entire evening rain; and at home alone. To whom should I go? In the midst of big Paris I am lonelier than you are at Rein-feld, and sit here like a rat in a deserted house. The only pleasure I have had was sending the cook away because of overcharges. You know my indulgence in this matter, but Rembours was a child in comparison. I am dining for the present in a café. How long that will last, God knows. I shall probably receive a summons, by telegram, to Berlin, in eight or ten days, and then good-bye to this song-and-dance. If my opponents only knew what a boon their victory would be to me, and how heartily I desire it! Then Rechberg would, perhaps, out of malice, do his best to have me called to Berlin. You can't have any more aversion to Wilhelmstrasse than myself, and if I am not persuaded that it must be, then I will not go. I consider it cowardice and disloyalty to leave the King in the lurch, under pretence of illness. If it is not to be, then God will permit those who search to find another *princillon* who will offer himself as cover for the pot. If it is to be, then "*s'Bogom*" ("with God"), as our Russian drivers used to say, when they took up the reins. . . .

Your            v. B.



THE LOVE LETTERS OF BISMARCK [JUNE,

PARIS, *June 18, '62.*

MY DEAR HEART,—To-day, at the above date, I have had to bring myself to lighting a fire, after struggling against the thought for several days. It rains every living day, hard only last night, and when the sun once shows himself I sit down on a chair in the garden and let him shine on my back. I don't like to go out any more in the evening; for, as the Parisians have the firm and fixed idea that they live in a very warm climate, they would consider it insulting to the honor of their country if they did not have doors and windows open until midnight, and did not sit in forty-five or fifty degrees, in a draught, and in damp, cold winds. They are incredibly hardened to it, and wear linen trousers because the calendar says it is summer. . . . Nothing definite yet from Berlin. Bought Paris guide. Farewell, my beloved angel. God be with you and your flock. Hearty love.

Your most faithful

v. B.

LONDON, *June 30, '62.*

MY DEAR HEART,—So you see I did have to come to London, and I have been here, with Harry Arnim, for an hour, having left Paris at nine to-day; very pretty green country on both sides of the channel, and a merry wind on the sea; the ride took about one and three-quarter hours from Boulogne to Folkestone, and now I am sitting at No. 41 c, Park Street, Grosvenor Square, in a cosy room, waiting for dinner, very hungry— Now I have had dinner, and am going out, so I will close; I only wanted to tell you that I am here and well, and send you hearty love. I expect to go back to Paris on Thursday, and to find there, by God's help, good news of you and the children. Lots of love.

Your most faithful

v. B.

PARIS, *July 5*, Evening.

MY DEAR HEART,—I have just got back from London ; rejoice to find your two letters, the second Tuesday's, and send only the news that I am very well, but too sleepy to say one word more. It was very nice there, but the English ministers know less about Russia than about Japan and the Mongols, and they are not cleverer than ours, either. Hearty love.

Your tired v. B.

Harry is playing very nicely on the embassy's Erard.

*July 18*, '62.

MY BELOVED HEART,—I got leave, yesterday, of six weeks, and it seems very strange to me that I do not use it to make a bee-line to you, so as to enjoy the delight of being in your midst, after so long a separation. But I have only the choice of growing fast to the hotel in Berlin again, or taking advantage of mountain and sea air here. There is nothing to keep me in Paris. The city is deserted by the people with whom I have to do. My request for leave was answered at once by a summons to come first to Berlin. I know the business. I answered that mountain and sea air had been prescribed for me, and that I needed to be invigorated by it if I were to play the minister afterwards. Thereupon leave was granted me to go to Bagnères de Luchon. I dare not venture to slip incognito through Berlin, or to Reinfeld, close by, without giving offence in high quarters, and if I made my way to Stolpmünde, still I should not be able to get through Berlin without paying toll of several weeks. They all declare there that they are in need of sea-cure, and unhappy at

having to spend their time in Berlin. Besides, I really promise myself the best effect on my health from my sojourn in the mountains, and hope, after six weeks, when I have promised to come to Berlin, to see you all again, safe and sound. . . .

It's not endurable here any longer; annoyance with the cooking is my only change. Theatre in this heat a sweat-bath, and almost nothing to do and no acquaintances. Yesterday Ewald Ungern was a passing relief. He has gone to Berlin to-day, and turns in at Hohendorf, if he finds that Uncle Alex is there. I am divided between contentment at leaving the hot dust here and vexation at seeing our separation so prolonged; but I would rather stay here and yawn than be at anchor in the Hôtel Royal. Commending you all to God's faithful protection, and with dearest love,

Your most faithful                      V. B.

TROUVILLE, *July 20, '62.*

MY DEAR HEART,—I came out here to see whether I could get a few baths here; but it is too tiresome, and the thought of spending weeks here unendurable. Shore, sea, lay of the coast as beautiful as can be, but the egoistic unsociableness of the French makes a stay here only possible when one brings an establishment along. Every one lives by himself, with his wife. The Metterniches have a bevy of relatives who live, six couples strong, in a big house. There it is moderately amusing in the evening, as much so as it can be for one who finds himself a stranger in a circle of intimate friends. But during the entire day everybody lives unto himself alone; one dines here with French people at *table d'hôte*, silent as in a Carthusian monastery, and my room, without a sofa, would be unen-

durable if it had not a view over the sea. I should leave this evening if I had not accepted an invitation to Metternich's. So to-morrow I shall probably move on, either to Cherbourg, to see fleet and iron-clads, or to Paris, thus leaving one day later for the south. Whether I shall put the trip through I don't yet know; I have a feeling of homesickness that next thing I shall be casting all consideration for Berlin to the four winds and coming to you all. A very pretty Countess Pourtalès is here, but I am so bored that I can't manage to fall in love with her even the least little bit. Otherwise I am very well, and am breathing the sea-air with delight. But one forgets entirely how to talk, among these doleful French, every one of whom fears to be taken for less than he would like, and with that idea stares at his own nose and has nothing to do with anybody else.

My pen won't write, steel and sputters! Farewell, my angel. I shall find news from you in Paris to-morrow, or, if I should go to Cherbourg, then Thursday. Lots of love.

Your most faithful

V. B.

BLOIS, *July 25, '62.*

MY DEAR HEART,— . . . A strange mixture of outer luxury and inner poverty is a French provincial town like this. I am sitting before a marble mantel-piece with a gold mirror, in front of it a handsome clock which won't go. I am writing at an old broken gaming-table, with a narrow-necked earthen bottle as inkstand, in a room ten feet square, drinking seltzer (siphon), with *sirop de groseilles*. For affluence such a town is far beyond one of ours of its size, but I could not live here. The disparity, not only in education, but in manners and good-breeding

is very appreciable in comparison with our customs. Even in Paris polite forms are customary only in the higher circles of society, and just as soon as you have left the *banlieue* behind, you encounter a peasant-like awkwardness in forms of intercourse beside which the good tone of the *bourgeoisie* in Rummelsberg or Schlawa appears in brilliant light. The officers, too, whose fleeting acquaintance I made in the café, disturb, by their bad manners, the feeling of sincere appreciation I have for this really excellent army. In a military way, we can learn a great deal from them, and you know my preference for all soldiers, but *c'est étonnant, comme on est mal élevé et inhospitalier*. . . . Best love to parents and children.

Your most faithful

v. B.

BORDEAUX, July 27, '62.

MY DEAR HEART,—You cannot refuse to testify that I am a good correspondent; I wrote this morning from Chenonceaux to your birthday-child, and now this evening, from the city of red wine, to you. But these lines will arrive a day later than those, as the mail does not leave until to-morrow afternoon. I left Paris only day before yesterday noon, but it seems to me a week. I have seen very beautiful castles—Chambord, of which the enclosure (torn out of a book) gives only an imperfect idea, corresponds, in its desolation, to the fate of its owner (I hope you know it belongs to the Duke of Bordeaux). In the wide halls and magnificent rooms, where so many kings kept their court, with their mistresses and their hunting, the Duke's only furniture consists now of the children's toys. My guide took me for a French Legitimist, and squeezed out a tear as she showed me the little

cannon. I paid for the tear-drop, tariff-wise, with an extra franc, although it is not my vocation to subsidize Carlism. The castle court-yards lay in the sun as quiet as deserted churches; there is a distant view round about from the towers, but on all sides silent woods and heather to the farthest horizon; not a city, not a village, not a farm-house, either near the castle or in the region round it. The enclosed sprigs, specimens of heather, will no longer show you how purple this plant I love so much blooms here, the only flower in the royal garden, and swallows the only living creatures in the castle; it is too solitary for sparrows. The situation of the old castle of Amboise is glorious; from the top you can look up and down the Loire for about thirty miles. Coming from there to this place one passes gradually into the south; wheat disappears, giving way to maize; between, twining vines and chestnut woods, castles and country-seats, with many towers, chimneys, and jutties, all white, with high-pointed slate roofs. It was boiling hot, and I was very glad to have a half-coupé to myself. In the evening glorious lightning in the whole eastern sky, and now an agreeable coolness, which I should find sultry at home. The sun set at 7.35; in Petersburg one can see now, without a light, at eleven o'clock. As yet there is no letter for me here; perhaps I shall find one in Bayonne. I shall stay here probably two days, to see where our wines grow. Now, good-night, my angel. Dearest love. Your most faithful v. B.

SAN SEBASTIAN, *August 1, '62.*

MY DEAR HEART,—I could not have believed last year that I should celebrate Bill's birthday this time in Spain. I shall not fail to drink his health in dark red



wine, and I pray God earnestly to take and keep all of you under His protection; it is now half past three, and I imagine you have just got up from table and are sitting in the front hall at your coffee, if the sun permits. The sun is probably not so scalding there as it is here, but it doesn't do me any harm, and I am feeling splendidly well. The route from Bayonne here is glorious; on the left the Pyrenees, something like the Dent du Midi and Moléson, which, however, are here called "Pie" and "Port," in shifting Alpine panorama, on the right the shores of the sea, like those at Genoa. The change in entering Spain is surprising; at Behobie, the last place in France, one could easily believe one's self still on the Loire; in Fuentarabia a steep street, twelve feet wide, every window with balcony and curtain, every balcony with black eyes and mantillas, beauty and dirt; at the market-place drums and fifes, and some hundreds of women, old and young, dancing a fandango, while the men in their drapery looked on, smoking. Thus far the country is exceptionally beautiful—green valleys and wooded slopes, with fantastic lines of fortifications above them, row after row; inlets of the sea, with very narrow entrances, which cut deep into the land, like Salzburg lakes in mountain basins. I look down on such a one from my window, separated from the sea by an island of rocks, set in a steep frame of mountains with woods and houses, below to the left city and harbor. My old friend Galen, who is taking the baths here, with wife and son, received me most warmly; I bathed with him at ten, and after breakfast we walked, or, rather, crawled, through the heat up to the citadel, and sat for a long time on a bench there, the sea a hundred feet below us, near us a heavy fortress-battery, with a singing sentry. This hill or rock would be an island did not a low

tongue of land connect it with the mainland. This tongue of land separates two inlets from each other, so you get towards the north a distant view of the sea from the citadel, towards the east and west a view of both inlets, like two Swiss lakes, and towards the south of the tongue of land, with the town on it, and behind it, landward, mountains as high as the heavens. I wish I could paint you a picture of it, and if we both were fifteen years younger then we would take a trip here together. To-morrow, or day after, I go back to Bayonne. . . . I am very much sunburned, and should have liked best to float on the ocean for an hour to-day; the water bears me up like a piece of wood. It is still just cool enough to be pleasant. By the time one gets to the dressing-room one is almost dry, and I put on my hat, only, and take a walk in my peignoir. The ladies bathe fifty paces away—custom of the country. . . . I do not like the Spaniards so well as I like their country; they are not polite, talk too loud, and the conditions are in many ways behind those in Russia. Custom-houses and passport annoyances without end, an incredible number of turn-pike tolls, four francs for one hour's drive, or else I should stay here still longer, instead of bathing in Biarritz, where a bathing-suit is necessary. Love to our dear parents and children. Farewell, my angel.

Your                    V. B.

BIARRITZ, *August 4, '62.*

. . . I am sitting in a corner room of the Hôtel de l'Europe, with a charming lookout over the blue sea, which drives its white foam between wonderful cliffs and against the light-house. I have a bad conscience, seeing so many beautiful things without you. If one could only bring

you hither through the air, I would go right back again to San Sebastian. Imagine the Siebengebirge with the Drachenfels placed by the sea; next to it Ehrenbreitstein, and between the two an arm of the sea, somewhat wider than the Rhine, forcing its way into the land, and forming a round bay behind the mountains. In this you bathe in water transparently clear, and so heavy and salty that you can lie easily right on top of it and can look through the wide gate of rocks to the sea, or landward, where the mountain chains tower up one after another ever higher and ever bluer. The women of the middle and lower classes are strikingly pretty, sometimes beautiful; the men surly and impolite, and the comforts of life to which we are accustomed in civilized lands are entirely lacking. In this respect I find Russia pleasanter to travel in than Spain. What actually drove me out of the country was the swinishness in certain indispensable arrangements, and then the cheating in the hotels, and the tolls. The heat there is no worse than here, and doesn't bother me; on the contrary, I am very well, thank Heaven. Day before yesterday there was a storm whose like I have never seen. I had to make three attempts before I succeeded in climbing the flight of four steps at the head of the pier. Pieces of stone and of trees flew through the air; so I unfortunately gave up my place in a sailing-vessel for Bayonne, as I didn't believe it possible that all would be quiet and cheerful again in four hours' time; so I missed a charming sail along the coast, stayed one day longer in San Sebastian, and left yesterday by the diligence, rather uncomfortably packed in between attractive little Spanish women, to whom I could not speak a single word. Still, they understood Italian enough for me to make clear to them my satisfaction with their exterior. Gr. Gallen and

wife were very kind to me. As I was looking for a fan, they presented me with theirs for you; it is simple, but painted in style characteristic of the country. You would like the wife very much; he, too, is a good fellow, but she amounts to more intellectually. I got Bernhard's long-expected letter to-day. He looks very black over politics, is expecting another child, and is building barns and stables. I long for news from you and the children. . . . Dearest love to all.                      Your most faithful                      v. B.

BIARRITZ, *August 10, '62.*

MY BELOVED HEART,— . . . I am living about as at Stolpemünde, only without champagne; I drank some with Orloff to-day, for the first time since I left Paris. In the afternoon I wander about among the cliffs, heaths, and fields, see orchards with aloe, figs, almonds, and borders of tamarinds, then I do some target-shooting, take my bath, sit on the rocks, smoking, gazing at the sea, and thinking of you all. Politics I have entirely forgotten; don't read any papers. The 15th has some claims upon me; for propriety's sake I ought to go to Paris, too, since I am in France, so as to congratulate the Emperor, hear his speech, and attend the dinner. But I shall hardly bring myself to the point of travelling over five hundred miles and interrupting the air-and-water cure, which is doing me so much good that I actually hate the thought of the dusty, close air of the royal residence. The Emperor is too reasonable a gentleman to take my absence amiss, and from Berlin I have an honest leave of absence. . . . Farewell, my angel, with dearest love.

Your most faithful

v. B.

BIARRITZ, *August 11, '62.*

MY BELOVED HEART,—I am hoping every day that the mail will bring a letter from you here to the shore, in consequence of my asking you to write *via* Paris, where it is known that I am here; to-morrow, perhaps! I have been without news since I left San Sebastian, and may God grant that the next may be good. It is my fault for staying here; but the first baths in the warm, salty foam of the waves did me so much good that I stayed, and so it is still; after each bath I feel a year less in my aging head; and if it should amount to thirty (seventeen I have taken already, counting Trouville and Sebastian), you will see me again as a Göttingen student. Unfortunately, the catch-polls are after me. A letter from Bernstorff is pursuing me, has been announced to me by telegram, was sent by a lucky misunderstanding to Bagnères de Luchon, whence it cannot reach me for four days—mountains without railroad and daily mail. If it only does not bring a direct summons to Berlin! I am all sea-salt and sun. Since the Orloffs have come I have not wanted companionship. Him you know, and you would like her just as well. She has quite your distaste for court and salon, like a Pomeranian damsel with just enough tincture of the big world. We walked to-day from seven to ten, over roads and heaths, then till after twelve I climbed alone about the cliffs laid bare by the ebb of the tide, lay three hours lazily on the sofa, reading and dreaming; into the water at three, which I should like best never to leave; I stayed in over half an hour, and since have had the feeling that I lack only wings to fly. After dinner we rode along the firm beach in the moonlight at falling tide, and then I walked alone again. You see my old vigor is coming back to me, and I am full of gratitude to God for it. If I could only know that you

are all well, and that I can go from here to Reinfeld without getting stuck anywhere, then everything would be fine and delightful. It is ten now, and I am going to bed; shall get up at six and bathe twice to-morrow. I talk only of myself, as you see, like an old hypochondriac; but what else can I tell you of this place, except that air and water are like balsam. May God keep you in just as good health. With heartiest love to all. Your v. B.

BIARRITZ, August 14, '62.

MY DEAR HEART,—To my great delight, yesterday I received at last good news from you—your letter of the 9th sent to Paris. You will have seen in the meantime, from my letter, that I have followed the advice of you and Liepmann\* without knowing what it was, and have already been here eleven days, during which I have taken fourteen baths, besides these four in Normandy and three in Spain, making twenty-one, and I shall probably bring it up beyond thirty, as I am now taking two a day, the first in the morning at seven, then promenade till about ten, breakfast, a few hours' siesta, and reading; at four another bath, and after dinner a long walk, with the sunset in the sea and the moonrise over the Pyrenees; all this *à trois* with the Orloffs, since whose coming I have not been lonely any more. You remember your partiality for him, and I am now revenging myself a little with her, by finding her very attractive and charming. We three act as though we were alone here. . . . Lots of love, and kiss all for me. God keep you as hitherto.

Your most faithful

v. B.

\*Physician in Stolp.



. . . I am rather ashamed not to have remembered our wedding-day, and Frau Orloff calls me *un monstre sans entrailles* on account of it. But you know that, while my heart is weak in point of dates, it is not ungrateful, either for God's mercy or for your love and truth. It has continued to be with us just as on the day of our wedding, and I have never thought that that was so long ago—five or six thousand happy days. May the Lord not consider how unworthy of them I was, and may He continue to pour out the fulness of His blessing upon us without regard to our deserts. Every year I come back to the error of believing that we were married in August, but, anyway, it was a good month. Day after to-morrow I shall write to our firstling.

Your

V. B.

FALAISE DE GOELANDS, *August 19, '62.*

MY DEAR HEART,—You will look in vain on all the maps for the place I date from above. About one mile north of Biarritz is a narrow gorge in the bluff, grassy, bushy, and shady, out of everybody's sight; between two rocks, with heather in blossom, I see the sea, green and white in foam and sun; beside me the most charming of all women, whom you will like exceedingly well when you know her better. . . . Orloff is lying before us on the grass, smoking, she is writing to her mother, and I to you, my heart; you know her very slightly from Petersburg, *née* Trubetzkoi. Her parents live in Fontainebleau, and when you meet you will forgive me for raving about her a bit. I am writing on a book, not very easy to do, sitting in the grass, under tamarind bushes. Am absurdly well, and as happy as I could be away from you dear ones. Monotonous country life, with walking-

tours by rocks, bushes, and heath. In a few days I shall put an end to this Robinson Crusoe existence, and find in the direction of home my comfort for the sorrow at parting from this idealized Stolpmünde, the mighty ocean, and the charming Russians. . . . It was a real godsend to me that the Orloffs came, about ten days ago, or I should have left then, and should not have found again in the sea the health of former days and the cheerful spirits. Outside of my home—I will say outside of six persons in Reinfeld—I want for not a jot or a tittle of anything, and in the end I shall buy a country-seat here on the heath, where we shall spend our old days—eating peaches and muscadine grapes, as if they were potatoes. Farewell, my heart; the wind is tearing my paper away from me, but it is a warm, mild wind. Love a thousand times over to parents and children.

Your most faithful                      v. B.

BIARRITZ, *August 22, '62.*

MY HEART,—I cannot let our little daughter's birthday go by without writing you how I have been drinking her health. First, this morning, in sea-water, for the warm waves were so powerful that, while rolling around in the sand, I took many a swallow of them; then in Madeira at breakfast; and then in wonderful, soft, humid Atlantic air on a point of rock extending out into the sea. After some hours of resting and writing letters to Paris and Berlin, I took my second drink of salt-water, this time in the Narbonne, without surf, with plenty of swimming and diving; two surf baths in one day would be too much for me. Then I dined with Orloff, and the birthday children were toasted royally with good old Mœt in Russian, German, and French. The other child was the sixty-year-

old Matvéi Stepanitsch Wolkow, and his birthday was really yesterday, but was celebrated later, with the other. After dinner the Princess played to me, at the open window over the sea, *C dur*, as *dur*, "The Winter Journey," and some of Chopin; then we went—two ladies, three gentlemen, and several dogs—to the light-house crag, ensconced ourselves in the heather, and watched stars, waves, and sea-gulls; only the waves and gulls we heard more than saw, far below in the darkness, only once in a while a wave flashed up to us in foam and sea-light, or a gull skimmed by near us, chattering and screaming, probably attracted by the light of our cigars. I always go to bed at eleven, often earlier, and wake up, myself, towards seven. My bed is very mediocre; still I always have to fight against falling asleep before the "Amen," while my thoughts linger with you loved ones somewhat longer than my words. Keep on writing to Paris; give lots of love to all

From your most faithful V. B.

FALAISE, August 25, '62.

MY DEAR HEART,—I was delighted to get your letter of the 20th, yesterday, forwarded from Paris. As you are still worried about my health (which you won't recognize at all when you see it), I have asked Kathy,\* the loveliest of women except one, to give me the enclosed certificate of health. I am writing to you again in the open air, on the grass, as I did recently, in warm, still air, over the sea, which shows at its edge three white, leaping waves, but behind that stretches out blue and smooth into the boundless, with fishing-boats' little white sails on the ho-

\* Princess Orloff.

rizon. . . . Yesterday we drove to Cambo, about fifteen miles from Bayonne, up the Nive, and spent the day in the mountains, a gorge like the valley of the Selke, called Pas de Roland, a roaring mountain-stream, and, near by, ripe figs, plucked from the tree. On the ride home, wonderful sunset, with glowing Pyrenees, and half Spain on fire the other side of the sea, then deep, very dark-blue, and fantastic lace-work of boughs as in the Italian Alps. . . . Day after to-morrow the Emperor comes, then the air of the court will draw through the crags and ravines, some politics will mingle with the idyl, and a few days later I shall start back again, shall devote about a week to the Pyrenees, and then try to break through the barriers at Berlin, although the King, as it seems, will not allow political work to pause at all. If I still must stay dangling at the Hôtel Royal, then I can't help it, and shall simply dangle. . . . But if I manage to go and take you, either to Berlin or Paris, I cannot endure the uncertainty through September; rather Schönhausen. If you want to answer the Princess Orloff in a friendly way, then write her in German; she speaks it as well as we do, but prefers to write in French. Every day the Princess plays me the Mendelssohn pieces that the Bechers used to sing to us, and Beethoven and the "Winter Journey," and is a woman you will be wildly enthusiastic about when you know her. Hearty love to little and big.

Your most faithful

v. B.

BIARRITZ, *August 30, '62.*

MY DEAR HEART,—I don't know whether this letter will be readable, for I am writing on bare rock, with a newspaper underneath; presumably our last breakfast here in the open air. We are sitting in a grotto, which has an

entrance from the land, and has a vaulted opening to the sea, forty feet above the surf, and the rocky ceiling above is twice as high. The glance strays over the wide sun-bright sea, and over a dozen odd craggy islands, on which the sea breaks, booming: behind them Biarritz stretching out over field and hill, and still wider and higher the blue chain of the Pyrenees, a thick Taunus-like mountain, over Fuentarabia, which commands the centre of the picture; to the right of that is spread out the Spanish coast of St. Sebastian, Bilboa, ever a paler blue in the distance until it mingles with ocean. It would be wellnigh impossible to produce a more charming, magnificent picture of sea, mountain, crag, city, and sunlight. Day after to-morrow the glory of the shore-life will come to an end; to-morrow the last bath. I cannot thank God enough for the measure of health that I have found here, and that I did not go to Luchon, as the Parisian physician bade me: there are springs there that are very effective against gout and rheumatism, but the people that I see coming through this place from there are as limp and run-down as ever any one came from Carlsbad, who did not belong there. At first I wanted to stay only one day, then three; then I felt so well after every bath that I kept putting off my departure till the following day, no matter how bored I was, until the Orloffs came; since then I have had companions in my out-of-door life and in my enjoyment of nature, in which the French and Spaniards are absolutely unimpressionable; they know only dressing and the club, and my fine Kathy wears such clothes that the Russian ladies don't even look at her; Auntie\* in Reinfeld is certainly more elegant. But even if she is not dressy, still she

\*Fräulein von Reckow.

makes up for it by playing to me every evening all Beethoven and all the Bechers' Mendelssohn pieces of Frankfort days, and Leiermann's "Winter Journey." It had to be so, if I was to stay here four weeks and get strong; otherwise I could never have endured the casino life and *table d'hôte* and French way of living. We dine together every day, mostly at the Orloffs', and I take my revenge by little dinners in remote ravines and caves. If you were with us, you would find this life charming, and we could continue it a month longer; even up to the 15th of November, the bathing goes on here and the out-of-door life. Day after to-morrow morning we pull up stakes together for Pau, make an excursion to Luchon so as to see the Hochgebirge, go from Toulouse by rail to Avignon, where we separate, and the Orloffs go to Italy, I to Berlin; whether I go *via* Paris, or direct by way of Geneva and Frankfort, depends still on letters from the Ministry, which I expect *en route*. The King's trip seems to have been entirely given up; I am glad not to have lost my leave of absence in Berlin; as soon as that is over, it doesn't matter whether I get stuck fast in Paris or Berlin; on the contrary, I should hope, from B., to steal out to Reinfeld and to decide my fate at last, so that our goods and chattels shall not become ice-bound at Bertheau's, and so that our eternal separation (almost four months) would have an end. May God unite us soon, in good health; I have been dawdling about as only an old house-dog of my species could. But now I must get back into the home rut. Give all hearty love. Your most faithful V. B.

CAUTERETS, September 2, '62.

MY BELOVED HEART,—The small size of this sheet means that I am very sleepy, and am to get up early to-



morrow ; but still I do not want to go to sleep without sending you a sign of life and thanking you and Marie for your last letters. We left charming Biarritz yesterday morning, restored in body and soul, spent the night in Pau, had this morning a view, somewhat veiled, to be sure, but still wonderfully beautiful, from Henry IV.'s castle to the chain of the Pyrenees, and then we came here by way of Lourdes and Pierrefitte, through rocky vales whose character recalled the Jura, and then the Italian slopes of the Alps in their wilder forms. . . . We all miss the sea-baths and sea-air ; but as far as my health is concerned I am transformed into an entirely different person ; nevertheless, from the bottom of my heart I am still ever and always your most faithful, now very weary

V. B.

BERLIN, *September 21, '62.*

MY BELOVED HEART, — I reached here yesterday morning, rather tired from the jolting of a wagon which played ball with me from Paris to Cologne. I should have slept it off here, but I find myself in just the same situation as in the month of May. Heydt and Bernstorff have asked for leave : the request of the former the King simply returned ; what happened to the latter I don't know at all, and have not yet seen the King. I shall simply ask his Majesty to permit me to go to Reinfeld to get my family and take them to Paris. If I have to enter on my duties here immediately, then I must go next to France, to hand over my letters of recall. If affairs here remain in suspense as they have been hitherto, and I go back to Paris with no definite time fixed for ending my mission there, then I believe that in a few weeks we shall move thither. I would then accept no position but that in Paris for the next six

months. Our mission there is now raised to an embassy, and if you come you will be formally presented as ambasadrice before an empty throne, and will have to go through all sorts of troublesome ceremonies besides, like Frau Montebello and Lady Napier. Much honor, little pleasure, yet on the whole much pleasanter than here. Yesterday morning, on arriving, I walked over to call on Roon, heard from him how matters stand, took coffee with the ladies, but was so shocked, on glancing at the mirror, by the chimney-sweep color which the twenty-five-hours-old coal-dust had laid on my face, that I took flight at once, bathed, slept two hours, and then paid a few ministerial and diplomatic visits. Hans came to see me beforehand, full of political schemes. I dined at five at Roon's, with Moritz, who was in the wildest embellishment of beard, which draws his already heavy chin too low down on his shoulders to suit my artistic eye. He thought me thin and burned as though I had crossed the desert on camels, but all agree with him that I look better than for years. I passed the evening there; went to bed at eleven o'clock and slept until seven, with all sorts of dreams of Southern sky, rocks, and fig-tree shades, till I awoke on the Wilhelmstrasse in the dingy reality of a rainy day in autumn. I must go to Reinfeld, and soon. I am getting melancholy here; rather at once into the Chamber, into strife and work, than this loafing hotel and calling existence. I expect Roon back from Babelsberg at three, and hope for news of the King. I am going over to call on Schlözer at 60 Behrenstr., then on Schleinitz, and others. I hope a letter from you is on its way here, bringing me good news. Dearest love to all our family. Moritz tells me that Theresa is there, and that mammy is better, thank Heaven. Your most faithful V. B.

BERLIN, *September 24, '62.*

MY BELOVED HEART,—I am worried a little because I still receive not a living word from you. My Paris letter to mother and to you, in which I said I was coming here, must surely have reached you on Sunday, at latest, for it left Paris on Wednesday or Thursday. You will already have read of our bad luck in the papers. I have been appointed Minister, with provisional chairmanship until Prince Hohenzollern has secured his discharge; then I shall become definitely Minister-president, and later am to take the Foreign Office. To-day I move over to No. 47, where Auerswald used to live. All this is not cheering, and I am struck with fear about it every time I wake up in the morning. But it must be. I am in no condition to write you now more than these lines. I am besieged on all sides with business affairs of every kind, and cannot leave Berlin for the next few weeks. . . . Dearest love to parents and children, and give yourself into God's hands; this is no easy matter for me either. Above all, please write me at once, if you have not done so already.

Your most faithful

v. B.

*October 1, '62.*

MY DEAREST HEART,—Now for the first time I recognize the deep wisdom of the saying: "In the morning at eight, when as yet none thought evil." I got up at seven, and have time at eight to send you two lines with my dearest love, for the world as yet leaves me in peace. The Lord has never yet forsaken me in an unexpected and unsought position, and my trust stands firm that He will not let evil come upon me in this place, or upon my health either. I sleep little, but feel well, ride every day on horses from



PRINCE BISMARCK



the royal stables in the Thiergarten, and dine at Roon's, when I am not invited out. We cannot move in here until the Houses are dissolved, about the 15th. I could not endure the double confusion of the Chamber without and the moving within. As soon as our things from Petersburg are here, I shall write asking you to stay here without unpacking for a few days, so as to talk over everything and to see each other at last. Farewell, my heart, and do not be cast down. Dearest love.

Your most faithful v. B.

(Without date: probably *October 12, '62.*)

MY HEART,—Please come now! We close Tuesday, God willing; telegraph me from Cöslin the hour you will arrive, so that I can meet you. If you have procured a good, respectable-looking servant there, bring him with you. Note to Rode attended to.

Your v. B.

Come straight off, my angel!

Friday.

(Postmarked BERLIN, *October 24.*)

MY DEAREST HEART,—It is horribly empty here, and I am painfully homesick for you, and for the consciousness that you are sitting in the little room near by, and I could go to you if I would. I dined with the King, with Netherlands royalties, did not get a ride, and am writing letter after letter. For you only this hearty greeting and sigh. I go Monday to Paris. To-morrow three deputations again, and one Grand Duke. Lots of love to parents and children, and how about the fine horses?

Your most faithful v. B.



THE LOVE LETTERS OF BISMARCK [Nov. '62

PARIS, *November 2, '62.*

MY DARLING,—Your crinoline desires I cannot satisfy. Yesterday was All-Saints'-Day, to-day Sunday and All-Souls'; all shops closed, and not a lady at hand who could give me information. . . . Yesterday I had a farewell audience at St. Cloud with Emperor and Empress, everything lovely and regretful; calls and business all day long. This morning I might have left, but I want to rest a day longer, and am expecting the Orloffs in the city to-day, to dine with them. I leave to-morrow morning, reach Magdeburg Tuesday morning, go to bed there, and expect his Majesty at two o'clock; after dinner we go to Letzlingen, three fine days in forest and hunting, and then back to the tread-mill. I shall be installed about the 8th. Lots of work is waiting for us! Do please do me the favor, I pray, of not sealing your letters clear up to the top; I always have to tear them across, and read them piece-meal! The weather is foggy, oppressive, and not a bit pleasant for travelling; I should like best to be on some bench by the stove, where I did not have to stir until summer. Again this year I have covered more than 10,000 miles, and there is no telling where my home is any more. In two weeks, or in one, we shall all be together again, with God's help, and then I shall lock myself in with you and shall never be at home to any one. Meanwhile give dearest love to parents and children.

Your most faithful

V. B.

110 .

LETTERS WRITTEN WHILE MINISTER-  
PRESIDENT AND IMPERIAL CHANCELLOR  
1863-1888



CARLSBAD, *June 24, '63.*

MY BELOVED HEART.—You will have received my lines from Schwarzenberg to-day, and have been informed by telegram of my arrival here. The King is well, still it is getting to be difficult to keep his craving for business within the bounds necessary for the cure, and I fear that as the cure progresses he will want to work just as much as he is working now, and that will not do. I left Schwarzenberg to-day at seven; beautiful region; good weather, but cold; cloak and plaid very useful. I am staying at the White Lion; in front I look down on the market-place; in the rear straight down into the water—I don't know what the thing is called—and over that at the big church; on the right, into the King's windows, between them three pheasants, swan, city of Frankfort, etc. This will give you the bearings; the apartment is pretty; two stories, airy. I dined with the King; drank coffee on the lawn with Aug. Malzan, Perpoucher, etc.; promenaded over the hills; saw Nolde at the shooting-gallery, and recognized most cordially a Baroness Scholl from Frankfort, whom I had absolutely forgotten; the valley is beautiful, especially from above. Well, good-bye; I must go to the King for tea. Dearest love to mother and the children.

Your most faithful,

V. B.

Where did you stay here?

Send me by the next chasseur some French visiting-cards on which is "Présid. du conseil et Min. des a.-étr. de Sa M. le Roi de Prusse."

CARLSBAD, *June 27, '63.*

MY DARLING,—I received your undated letter yesterday. That you pay parting respects in Potsdam (Alexandrine, Queen Dowager, Crown Princess, Friedrich Carl) is very suitable. Arrange it in the form of questions; write to the court ladies: "You are going for a few months into the country, and would your Royal Highnesses be so gracious as to receive me in order to give me leave to depart?" I suppose it will not be possible to go with the Crown Princess, as she wants to leave on the 1st; and you cannot get off so soon, I suppose, unless our beloved mammy feels well enough to travel. It won't really be very dreadful if you do not get to Potsdam. Box for opera-hat must be there, as Bodelschwingh would say; it doesn't look like a hat-box, is quite flat, like a bed-pan, and red. Farewell; God keep you and mother and children. I am going to walk for two hours. No assassins here; good police. The Emperor has given notice that he is coming; day still uncertain.

Your

V. B.

Please send me two dozen photographs of myself in plain clothes. I am in furious demand here, and can be had only in uniform.

CARLSBAD, *June 28, '63.*

MY DEAR,—The enclosed bread-and-butter letter came to me by mistake. I dined to-day with Helen,\* whose very good cigar I am still smoking; Keudell, too; he must marry Rhaden's daughter. Aside from that, I didn't go out to-day at all, although the weather's charming, so I will rather think of you on top of the mountains than spill ink

\* Grand Duchess.

here any longer. Hug the children for me, and remain in God's protection. Your most faithful V. B.

If there are more photos of me, send them; they are tearing off my coat-tails here for them.

CARLSBAD, *July 7, '63.*

MY DEAR HEART,—This letter, I presume, will find you no longer in Berlin. I shall probably have news from you about that to-morrow. God grant you a safe journey, with bag and baggage (under which I involuntarily include mammy). . . . Disraeli is leader of the Conservative opposition in England, something like Stahl against the Auerswald ministry, and is also a baptized Jew, like Stahl.

Aunty has my warmest sympathy; it is worse to lose children than to die one's self, it is so contrary to the natural course of things. But how long is it till we follow them? . . .

NUREMBERG, *July 19, '63.*

MY DEAR HEART,—. . . Engel hasn't a clean shirt in the bag and the luggage is at the station, so that I am sitting here in railway-dust and discomfort, waiting for a dinner which will presumably be bad. I have no news of you since I left Carlsbad, of course, as letters have not been forwarded to me from there. With God's help, you will all be well. What shall I give Bill for his birthday? Travelling agrees with me splendidly; but it is very annoying to be gaped at like a Japanese at every station; it is all over with the incognito and its pleasant features, until I pass out of ken, like Fra Diavolo, and somebody else has

the advantage of being the object of general ill-will. I should have liked very much to go by Vienna to Salzburg, where the King is to be to-morrow; I should have lived our wedding-trip over again; but political considerations kept me from it, for people would have ascribed to me Heaven only knows what schemes if I had arrived there simultaneously with the Russian replies. . . . Dearest love to old and young.                      Your most faithful                      V. B.

SALZBURG, *July 22, '63, 6 A.M.*

MY DEAR HEART,—I must send you the date at least from this charming little town, at the moment of leaving.

GASTEIN, *24th.*

I wanted to send you some edelweiss with this letter, but I mislaid it at the Lueg Pass. . . . The King is well, but the affair of the Crown Prince is gnawing at his heart. Since the day I left Carlsbad, when a paper accidentally found its way into his hands with those things in it which we had carefully kept from him, his good humor seems to be gone; he is quiet and brooding, and forces himself to be gay! It makes one's heart ache to see how he fights down his feelings, but likes to be alone. The exposure seems to come entirely from Coburg. I must write for the chasseur, and these words are only to say that I am well, and to carry you hearty love.

                    Your most faithful                      V. B.

GASTEIN, *August 12, '63.*

I am well, my heart, but bothered with messages from all directions. Yesterday, at a height of 7000 feet, I shot two chamois; to do it had to sit three hours on the rocks in the burning heat; baked through in spite of the height.



On the 15th we go from here to Salzburg, 16th Stuttgart, 17th Baden. I cannot leave the King, on account of the blustering at Frankfort. H. R. H. here; leaves in half an hour; very friendly towards me, but cool relations yonder. Farewell! Zietel is urging me to close.

Your most faithful                      v. B.

BUKOW, *September 21, '63.*

MY BELOVED HEART,—I wanted to write you a right comfortable, nice letter on this last day of summer, and with this thought I lay down three hours ago on the sofa, but went to sleep and have just waked up, when I have only a quarter of an hour left before dinner, which is at six. I turned out at seven, rode uninterruptedly till half past one, as “major,” to see our brave soldiers burn powder and ride to the attack. At first I joined Fritz, who was commanding three regiments of cavalry; then I went over to the Garde du Corps, chased like mad over stock and stone, and have not passed such a pleasant day for a long time. I am living here next to the King and two adjutants, in a nice old house belonging to Count Flemming, the ambassador and cellist: pretty country, with hills, lakes, and roads, and, above all, nothing to do, after finishing my business with his Majesty yesterday. I am sorry to say I must get back to the tread-mill to-morrow morning; and now to dinner, after having slept myself stupid and meanwhile got a stiff neck from the sharp edge of the sofa. We have eighty persons at table, all sorts of strange officers, funny English, very nice Russians, and the whole wretched Diet.

I have no plain clothes along; have been all major for forty-eight hours. It seems to me all the time as though

dear mother must be going to see this letter, and to rejoice that things are going well and peacefully with me; but her large blue eyes are closed and her short little arm will not hold this paper up to them. Give love to father and the children. I must dress.

Your most faithful                      v. B.

BERLIN, *October 21, '63.*

MY BELOVED HEART,—Your little circular letter I have received with thanks and sent off. I have just come in from riding; glorious, still, mild autumn air; feel just like a fox-hunt. I expect Keudell, Zietel, and others to dinner at five; in the minute between I am writing you this, because I am going to Magdeburg to-morrow with his Majesty to dedication of Cathedral, and shall not write. If our dad feels very badly about your going away on the 27th, then leave me alone another week or so; I sha'n't get away from my work-room and the sessions of the Ministry, anyway, while the Chamber is opening. I shall be heartily glad if you come earlier, but will not be selfish to our lonely old dad. I am very well, but am getting buried deeper and deeper in documents. Hearty love to father and children.                      Your most faithful                      v. B.

I have had an awfully sad letter from Canitz! I don't want at all to send it to you, and don't know how to answer it.

BERLIN, *October 27, '63.*

MY HEART,—It is bitter cold, but I am well. Have you begun heating yet at Reinfeld? I hope so; we have been doing it here for a week. I was sitting alone with

Keudell in the blue salon yesterday after dinner, and he was playing, when I got your Sunday's letter. Truly a fine holiday mood in which you wrote! Trust in God, my heart, and in the saying that barking dogs do not bite. I did not escort the King to Stralsund, because it is a fatiguing trip and would set me back two days in my work. His Majesty is here again this evening; the threats against his life are far more to be feared than those directed against me, but that, too, is in God's hand only. Do not let worry spoil the last fine days for you, and when you do break up there, then send some woman or other ahead to arrange things here as you wish them. I must to work. Farewell, with much love. Your most faithful v. B.

Only about thirty-eight degrees to-day, and glistening sun. I got this\* anonymously, twice from different directions.

BABELSBERG, *November 1, '63.*

MY BELOVED HEART,—I am going to use a moment, while waiting here for the King, who is dining at Sans Souci, to write you two words, as I used to do from Zarskoe or Peterhof. Only to say that I am well and am heartily glad that I am now so soon to see you holding sway again in the empty Berlin rooms. The Diet comes on the 9th, with all its torments; still I expect to go on the opening day to Letzingen with his Majesty, and to live two days in the woods. During that time I hope you will get through with the hammering and hauling which will necessarily accompany your moving in, my love, and then on my return I shall find everything in order.

\*Psalm xci., enclosed, written by a lady's hand.

During these days I have been living and working entirely by myself, have eaten alone generally, and except for riding have not left the house; quiet and irksome, once in a while a council of ministers. These will be held every day this week, I suppose, in view of the dear Chambers, and after the King has been a week in Stralsund and Blankenburg and much put in store. I hear the rolling of his carriage now and must close. With hearty love to dad and the children.

Your most faithful V. B.

CARLSBAD, *July 8, '64.*

MY BELOVED HEART,—I have received your Kröchlendorf letter with thanks, and the courier gives me a few minutes to write, after finishing my work. I am going to use them to complain of the weather; it rains day and night, and is so cold that I have had to have my rooms heated every morning for four days; all the world is catching cold. I have such a bad one that I can't see out of my eyes—catarrh, as the book says. . . . I found a splendid pretext for shaking off King Otto, from whom I am never safe when I go to walk; hereafter I shall make the most of it. Lauer had to declare, in his medical capacity, that I should do very little talking, and thus I keep clear of all conversation. . . . I associate with nobody here, really; since the Stolypin woman took advantage of a rainy walk over the hills, which I was foolish enough to take with her, and used it for politics from beginning to end, I trust nobody any more, but sneak through covered paths towards the less respectable side (Eger Valley), and away, where one meets only peasants, and I climb up undiscovered mountains through pathless ways! And still this didn't prevent me from meeting Sigmund

Arnim in the thick woods, on a spot where no one with gloves had ever been before; and, of course, he accompanied me for two hours, as he couldn't find his way home without me. Pardon this torn sheet. I began writing on it to Eulenburg. Dearest love to all of you, especially dad.

Your most faithful

V. B.

CARLSBAD, *July 20, '64.*

MY BELOVED HEART,—The King has just left for Marienbad; trains of lovely women with enormous bouquets, which filled his carriage to overflowing; a grand hurrah and emotion. Now things will seem rather empty to me; all acquaintances gone, too, except Abeken and Keudell. They are dining now; I have done so already—with the King. He thanked me, in saying good-bye, and was much moved, and gave me all the credit for the good that God's help has done to Prussia. May God preserve us, continue mercifully to guide us, and not leave us to our own blindness. In this calling one truly learns that one may be as clever as the cleverer of this world, and still, at any time, may go into the next moment as a child into the dark. Well, to Vienna to-morrow morning; we spend the night at Prague; perhaps we may have peace with the Danes in a week; perhaps still war next winter. I shall make my stay in Vienna as short as possible, so as not to lose too many baths in Gastein. After that I shall, I suppose, go to Vienna again with his Majesty; thence to Baden; then the Emperor of Russia is coming to Berlin, at the beginning of September. Before that no prospect of rest, if then.

Interruption after interruption! And now it is five, and at six Itzenplitz, and then Helen, and then the mail

THE LOVE LETTERS OF BISMARCK [JULY,

goes out. So farewell, my heart; I want to walk an hour now, the first to-day. God be with you all.

Yours,

V. B.

VIENNA, *July 22, '64.*

MY DEAR HEART,—I left Carlsbad this morning. . . . I am staying at Werther's, whose wife is not here; meanwhile have seen nobody but Rechberg—and a letter from Motley. Was rained in at the Volksgarten for two hours, and listened to music; the people looked at me as though I were a new rhinoceros for the zoological garden, for which I sought consolation in some very good beer. I can't yet tell how long I shall stay here. A great many calls to make to-morrow; dine at Rechberg's, in the country; then, if possible, conclude peace with Denmark, and flee in all haste into the mountains of Gastein. I wish all that were over and done. The two days of travel have rested me a little, mentally, but physically I am very tired, and bid you good-night. God keep you and all who are under the Reinfeld roof. You will, perhaps, have this letter by Monday evening; write me, then, your next to this place still. Your most faithful V. B.

VIENNA, *July 27, '64.*

MY BELOVED HEART,—I have had one letter from you here, and am longing for the second. I am leading a laborious life—four hours daily with unmanageable Danes, and not yet through. It must be settled by Sunday, whether war or peace. I dined with Motley yesterday; very agreeable wife; evidently has been a beauty; two nice daughters; the oldest and handsomest visiting in

America. We drank a great deal, were very merry—which is not often so with him during these war troubles. He has grown gray, and has cut his hair off short. After the conference to-day, I dined with the Emperor at Schönbrunn, took a stroll with Rechberg and Werther, and thought of our moonlight expedition. I just spent an hour in the Volksgarten, not incognito, I am sorry to say, as seventeen years ago, but stared at by all the world. Music of a Hungarian regiment played a Prussian song in my honor, and the leader explained to me in broken German that his sympathies were Prussian. The Prussian song again while we were leaving; very well-meant of the bearded rascals, with their narrow blue trousers; but this existence on the stage is very uncomfortable when one wants to drink a glass of beer in peace. I hope to go to Gastein on Saturday, whether there is peace or not. It's too hot for me here, especially at night. Kurt\* has just come in with a lot of signatures, and so I bid you good-night, with love one thousand times over.

Your most faithful                      v. B.

GASTEIN, *August 6, '64.*

MY BELOVED HEART,—The work is growing worse and worse, and I don't see at all how I am going to get time for it here, where I do nothing in the morning after my bath. Since my arrival on the 2d, in a storm with hail as big as musket-balls, I have just managed for the first time to take a regular hour's walk in glorious weather. Returning, I wanted to make use of half an hour to write to you, but, behold, in walks that Abeken

\*Chancery servant.



with drafts and telegrams, and now I have to go to the King. Dinner and tea every day, between times driving with his Majesty, is all very nice, and I am glad to see the King so well and in such good spirits, but the time, the time! . . . Farewell my heart, God guard you. Write! With much love.

Your most faithful                      v. B.

SCHÖNBRUNN, *August 20, '64.*

MY BELOVED HEART,—It is most remarkable that I happen to be staying in just those rooms, on the ground floor, which open on the retired private garden into which we intruded by moonlight almost exactly seventeen years ago. Looking over my right shoulder, I see through a glass door along the dark path hedged with beeches by which, secretly enjoying what was forbidden, we wandered up to the glass windows, behind which I am living. It was then one of the Empress's apartments, and I am now repeating by moonlight, in more comfort, that former stroll of ours. I am now thoroughly sleepy; wish you and all the family good-night.

Your most faithful                      v. B.

BADEN, *September 1, '64.*

MY BELOVED HEART,—Yesterday I received Bill's letter with your postscript, and am awaiting a telegraphic answer about your condition with some anxiety, for you are so very ready to report yourself not sick, and it must take strong hold on you before you fall silent. May God help you speedily and completely. I can hardly expect an answer before evening, since, there being no

telegraph open at night, my despatch only went off at seven this morning. Please have the children write every day, and fully, how you are, or I shall have no peace. It is now near four o'clock, and I hope the messenger with the answer is already in sight of the towers of Stolp. The King came to-day from Mainau, well and in good spirits, driving to the races with the Queen. Her Majesty received me very graciously day before yesterday, and talked of politics of every sort. I am staying in the Villa Stadtelhofer, on the hill above the Lichtenthal road, since there was no room in the town. I look out through the open window before me upon the old castle, the rocks beside it on which the mists hang, and the Mercury with its top invisible, the whole through a veil of rain drawn across the warm air. The outlook over city and mountains is charming, but storm, homesickness, and anxiety for you make me sad; besides, I am to dine at six with Princess Anna; Prince and Princess Carl are here; Flemming lodges over me, scrapes his violoncello, the Countess sings, and Keudell accompanies her. Abeken's busy hand is constantly showering on me a new store of scribbled notions as soon as I have labored through the old ones. I do not recall from where I wrote you last. All the way from Vienna here I have not stopped to reflect. I slept a night in Salzburg, the next in Munich, talked much and long on business with Schrenk, who has become very thin, and our friend, Beust's enemy; then I slept at Augsburg, came thence by way of Stuttgart hither, hoping to pass in restful idleness the two days before the King came, but was able only two hours yesterday morning to loaf in the forest. Huntsmen, inkstand, audiences, and visitors whirled about me ceaselessly. Uexküll, too, is here, Chreptowisch lodges next to me, and I must not show myself on the promenade;

nobody leaves me in peace. Hearty love to our papa and the children, and, above all things, get well, and write me at once how you are, for the telegraph will give only a syllable of the truth. Your most faithful v. B.

BADEN, *September 5, '64.*

What has really been the trouble with you, my angel? Praise and thanks to God that you are better; I was deeply distressed, and the telegraph was so slow in response to my first inquiry that I still feel oppressed; it was almost forty hours after the question that the answer came. But what was the cause of the sickness? Have you suffered from annoyances, anxiety, exertion, or did it befall you suddenly when quite well? Your nerves have never given you trouble before, and suddenly to be so threatening! I am strongly inclined to look for the blame in the doctors, mineral water, and drugs. Only keep quiet and rely on the healing force of your constitution and of rest.

I write and walk about among the hills; for two days I have not gone down into the city at all, only seeing it from the window. In three or four days I shall probably start away for Berlin. Hearty love.

Your most faithful v. B.

BERLIN, *September 30, 1864.*

After a very vexatious morning, to be followed by a Roan dinner and an evening session of the ministry, only two lines of love and greeting. A remnant of melancholy shows through the splendid news of your health, in your lament over the matter of expense; and if it were an hundred-fold more, you must not let your gratitude and joy for your

recovery be troubled by it. Did the grapes from Borchart arrive in good order? I have commissioned him to send a little box every other day; they are very good—from Fontainebleau. If they are spoiled when they reach you, cancel the order; otherwise not; they will certainly be good for you. I shall probably go to Baden to-morrow evening or early next day. Whether from there to Biarritz will then be decided. A passport for there I take with me, but whether the journey is to be made, God knows.

Your most faithful v. B.

BADEN, *October 3, '64.*

MY DEAR,—God grant that your recovery has proved as permanent as, to my gratitude and joy, it appeared from the two letters which reached me in Berlin to have been complete. I am a little uneasy at your having written the first long letter yourself; do not presume too much on your strength, but call in the children; if you were able to do it without being worn out, that is certainly great progress. It is distressing that aunty leaves you. I have begged Jenny on this account to hasten her return. Can you not have another friend with you, some lady of the neighborhood? Or keep one of the children always at hand; let her read to you; that is good practice for her at the same time; whether they cut lessons in consequence is in this case of no consequence at all. I arrived here yesterday, expecting to go to Biarritz to-morrow, but must delay at least one day, because the Empress Eugénie is coming here to-morrow. I have been confirmed in the purpose from several quarters, even if I take only fourteen baths. Goltz has just come from there, stout and hearty as I never saw him before. He says that as soon as he had

taken those baths he felt like another man, and kept improving all the time he was there; besides, hot weather continually, while here it is as cold as it was and is in Pomerania — frost at night, and I have fire. But I am likely to have a struggle with his Majesty yet about the journey, and I am this moment going to meet him. . . . In Berlin I dined at Roon's one day, at Mühler's another. Mrs. Mühler is pretty well again; her sickness had a strong resemblance to yours, save that in your case, thank God, there are no complications from pains in the head. Frerichs prescribes iron for her, too, also ferruginous baths, very strong broths. Commending you all to God's gracious protection,

Your most faithful                      v. B.

BADEN, *October 4, '64.*

MY DEAR HEART,—I found the King to-day so much inclined to favor my trip to Barritz that I seized the opportunity at once and start to-morrow morning. . . . May God only grant that your recovery goes on steadily. That will do me as much good as the sea-bathing. I have still much packing and writing to do; have just come from the castle, where Eugénie is. It is twelve o'clock; I must rise at five.

Your most faithful                      v. B.

BIARRITZ, *October 7, '64.*

Here I really am, my heart—it seems like a dream; the sea before me, Kathsch at work on Beethoven overhead, such a sky as we have not had the whole summer, and no ink in the house! In Paris, yesterday, we still had fires; here I had to put on summer clothing at once, which I had not expected to do again this year. . . . It is all very

fine, if I only had news first that you are well. I will not do any work at all; if despatches are sent me, I will retire into the Pyrenees, to Itzazu. I am just going to take my first bath; the water is at seventy degrees, the air at least eighty-eight degrees. Hearty love.

Your most faithful

V. B.

BIARRITZ, *October 11, '64.*

At last the mail has brought me your letter of the 5th, after I have been for several days in real distress from the want of it. Letters from Berlin usually come here in two days. I am glad that Liepmann, at least, regards you as better, but it is a pity you do not feel so yourself. How do you eat and sleep? In these points is the surest measure of your progress. I reproach myself for not having remained with you, for certainly separation has a disturbing effect upon your nerves, but it will be a consolation to you that, with God's help, I am going to get entirely well again here. I have to-day taken my sixth bath since the 7th, when I began, and now I take two every day, feeling after each one light and strong. In the intervals we loaf about on the shore, sit reading and writing on the rocks over the water—in short, a real time-killing life. I have so habituated myself to write that this utter idleness gives me a very bad conscience. I received day before yesterday a cipher despatch from the King, and yesterday I spent an hour dictating the answer to Bölsing (secretary), who attends me; apart from this, I do absolutely nothing but loaf and eat when not asleep. . . .

By all means do not stop the grapes from coming—plenty of them. I firmly believe that they do you more good than the poisonous concoctions from the drug-shop. For the

children, I send a few postage-stamps from to-day's mail. . . . May God of his mercy relieve you speedily of your sickness, and give us all a happy reunion—I hope in about a fortnight. Farewell, my angel; love to old and young. I am now going to dinner, seven o'clock, but we breakfasted thoroughly at eleven.

Your most faithful

v. B.

ITZAZU, October 17, '64.

MY HEART,—I have already sent you a letter by the courier this morning, but *pour la rareté du fait* I must write you from this magic place. We have taken breakfast here, fourteen miles east of Biarritz, among the mountains, and are sitting in a charming summer atmosphere on the bank of a murmuring stream, whose name we do not learn, because nobody speaks French, but only Basque; high, narrow rocks before and behind us, with all sorts of heath, ferns, and chestnut-trees. The valley is called Le Pas de Roland, the western edge of the Pyrenees. Before starting, we took our bath; the water cold, the air like July; despatched the courier, then a charming drive through mountains, forests, and meadows. After eating, drinking, and climbing ourselves tired, we five are sitting, Orloff and French reading aloud together; Kathsch, Mlle. de Meynard, and I are writing, I on the lid of the box which held the grapes and figs we have eaten. At five we drive, by sunset and moonlight, to Biarritz, and dine at eight. It is too comfortable a life to last, and I am distressed to enjoy it all without you, and cannot wish it to last longer, because it keeps me from you. They are acting foolishly at Berlin, and I have already threatened to go to Spain with Orloff if they will not be reasonable. Bodel and



Itz\* are as if beside themselves, under the direction of all sorts of privy-councillors, Delbrück included.

*The 20th.*

Day before yesterday evening the Orloffs went to Pau to visit the Panins; I went along; back yesterday. It was oppressively close there; thunder-storms and showers in the evening while we were on the railway; from Bayonne here in the carriage; the ocean beautiful. After being as quiet as a duck-pond for several days, with the land breeze, it looks to-day like a boiling kettle. But with it all the wind is soft and moist, sun and rain alternate—real Atlantic weather. I take my fourteenth bath to-day; I shall hardly go beyond the fifteenth, for it seems as if I must leave this warm coast to-morrow. I do not wish to pass through Paris if the Emperor is not there, and his Majesty will probably go to Nice on Sunday to visit all the Reusses. To await his return would put my plans out too much, and trouble my conscience for too long absence from Berlin. I am still struggling between duty and inclination, but the former, I fear, will prevail. I will first take my bath, and then decide whether there shall be only one more. In any case, the fortnight here has done me much good, and I only wish I could transplant you hither or to Pau, without the trouble of the journey, then probably your strength would grow faster. Your description of your winter on the 15th, which reached me yesterday, has really frightened me. Did you ever get a letter of the 6th from me at Bordeaux? God help you to speedy and full recovery.

Your most faithful

V. B.

\*Bodelschwingh and Itzenplitz.

PARIS, *October 25, '64.*

Before going to bed after an exhausting day, I want to report to you my safe arrival here. Yesterday noon I left dear Biarritz; mowers were in the meadows as I drove away under a hot sun; friendship escorted me to Bayonne; at six this morning I arrived here; much politics, an audience with the Emperor and Empress at St. Cloud, calls, dinner with Drouyn de Lhuys, and now I am going to bed tired. God be with you and all Reinfeld.

Your

v. B.

BERLIN, *October 30, '64.*

MY LOVED HEART, — My joy in being a thousand miles nearer you, and in the hope of speedy reunion, was clouded last evening on my arrival by your letter of the day before, which was less assuring than either of the two I received in Paris from you and Herbert. I had firmly hoped that I should find you here already without notice, since on the journey I read in a Hanover newspaper that you had arrived in Berlin; and now you are in real trouble, my poor darling, and again tortured by the saddest thoughts. I constantly reproach myself that I have not been with you instead of at Biarritz; you would surely then be stronger by this time, and, in any case, full of confidence. I would gladly go for you now, but the accumulated arrears of business overwhelm me so that last night, after my arrival, I sat up till two, and to-day get my first chance to write you at midnight. For at least three hours I was busy signing my name, and reports in abundance, for the King. Gortschakoff was waiting here for me, and all possible ambassadors. The treaty of peace with Denmark was signed to-day, but now the negotiations



PRINCESS BISMARCK



are just beginning in earnest on what is to be done with the Duchies. Besides the tariff business, over which I am greatly at odds with certain colleagues, and perhaps shall fall out with them entirely, and then all the preparations for the precious Chamber. I am thought here wholly to have recovered my health, thinner and stronger, but they will soon drive it out of me again. The weather in Paris, as it looks to me from here, was still very mild, only it rained; in Cologne very cold; here it is a fine winter day to-day, without snow. I was at Essen, at Krupp's cannon foundry, half a day, as I heard that the King would not come from Blankenburg till to-day; in the four weeks they have deprived him, too, of a bit of health. May God but lend ear to prayers, and give you yours again, so that we may together again lead a happier life than this now is. As soon as I have you here, you will once more find strength and fresh spirits; the very change of air will do you good. How did the driving out affect you? Can you think without dread of a journey to Stolp? You could stop a night there, the next at Cöslin, and again in Stettin. I can go for you, I hope, there or to Cöslin. God grant it be soon.

Your most faithful                      v. B.

BERLIN, *November 3, '64.*

That is, *November 4, 1 A.M.*

MY HEART,—Since I shall have no chance to write from Letzlingen to-morrow and next day, I will tell you to-night, or rather this morning, that I am well, and that I earnestly long for you. I have done two unwonted things to-day: joined in the hunt in the Grunewald, in which I was among the first at the death, and played whist, at which I won ten rix-dollars and eighteen silver groschen

from the Czar, then supped at Adlerberg's, whence I have just returned to go to bed, as we start for Letzlingen at seven. Love to papa and the children, and God make you well speedily, my darling.

Your most faithful and very tired                      v. B.

BERLIN, *November 14, '64.*

MY BELOVED HEART,—I was in fine spirits a little while ago, since the treaty of peace has actually been completed, and several other matters settled as I wished. The King had just left me; had signed the treaty in my office; given me the order of the Black Eagle, and, what I cared more for, embraced me very warmly; and I was saying that just at that time day after to-morrow I should be reunited with you here, and meanwhile, to-morrow, should shoot many pheasants, when in came the little bird of ill omen, Jenny, and told me, to my terror, that on Friday you had had a relapse, and afterwards had felt very weak again. I am in deep anxiety and distress at this, and my hope revives only at the thought that I have as yet no telegram giving up your journey, so that you must still feel strong enough to travel. Your latest letters were so favorable, and the very last one of Friday did not at least contradict them, that they rocked me into the dream that now everything is well again, and that at last, day after to-morrow, we shall be together. As you know, I am prone to believe what is most pleasant, and reckon that Jenny exaggerates; but I pray God very earnestly that it prove so, and that we may at last meet day after to-morrow. Jenny says that the doctors, even after the relapse, were in favor of the journey. If I only knew beforehand how you will stand the travelling. If it is

too much, be sure not to force it, but take a rest at Cöslin, and do not go on to Stettin till afternoon, and then sleep there. . . . In thirty hours more I hope to see you in Stettin. May God add his blessing. Much love to the children. I send nobody to meet you, since you have expressly forbidden it.

Your most faithful                      v. B.

CARLSBAD, *July 1, '65.*

MY DEAR HEART,—It delights me to learn from your two letters that it is well with our scattered band everywhere. Give yourself no anxiety about the budget excesses; what must be, must be, and whether you spend more or fewer of these petty gulden has no result of moment for the future heir of each of our children. Practise no Pomeranian hospitality in Hamburg, but, as to what you want, do not dicker about farthings, as you dear women are apt to do. Your table seems to me inexpensive, and your meals will be more agreeable at home than at the *table d'hôte*, where at times you fare as between Steiglitz and the Turk.\* We are having wretched weather; especially when I have time to go out it rains like a cataract, and when the sun shines I am sure to be driven with work. Keudell has not come yet; he must have had frightful arrears. Our abode might have its charms in good weather. My outlook extends over the city, along the Tepl to the Erz Mountains, northwest, and thus into the sunset, should there be one, but mostly to a gray cloud bank; and to climb several times a day one hundred and eighty feet of steep and stony path down to the ship and up again is not one of

\* Between whom she had fainted on one occasion at dinner in Petersburg.



my favorite occupations. For the rest, it is quiet, visits made difficult by the remoteness, a cow-stable under my floor, fowls in the yard eating out of the bowl set for a chained-up lame dog, and evenings the lowing of the kine under me, with distant baying of dogs, "the watch-dog's honest bark," as in the country. . . . All happiness to you and Marie. God guard you both and Reinfeld. The huntsman takes this to Leipsic.

Your faithful v. B.

CARLSBAD, *July 7, '65.*

At last, my heart, it is warm here, seventy-two in the shade, one hundred and four in the sun. . . . The enclosed will show you at last that you have an uncommonly good-looking husband, beside whom even *le beau Guiche*, now Grammont, appears to no advantage, though I think him right handsome. But you will not believe it, and therefore I close, provoked. One thousand good wishes to Mary and all friends. The Mühlens are here, on the way to Berchtesgaden.

Your faithful v. B.

CARLSBAD, *July 17, '65.*

MY HEART,—I am very sorry you have been worried by silly rumors of my sickness. Folks are always short of stuff, and, as they cannot keep silence, they give out gabble. I am as well as is possible with the heat and work. Keudell in white, Abeken and Zietel in light gray and white, make peculiar effects of the glowing sunbeam! The Mühlens go to-day by Eger to Berchtesgaden, off into the night. She stirred things up here, indeed, and her tyrannical hunt for pleasure upset my habits of life.

Yesterday Princess Lippe, coffee for forty people, jugglers, dance in the Kaiser Park behind Friendship Hall on the Tepl. The King stayed from five o'clock till nine. I seceded from the table of Princes and Excellencies, and joined the young folk, Polish, Wallachian, and Hessian girls. But as a bathing resort for folks in search of pleasure, Carlsbad is the most wretched I know. After receiving this write me no more here, but at Salzburg, where I hope to be the 23d, or at Gastein the 24th. Heartfelt love.

Your faithful V. B.

GASTEIN, *August 1, '65.*

MY EIGHTEEN-YEARS-BELOVED HEART,\*—Thirteen years ago to-day† you were in a critical condition, and we have so many a deliverance since to thank God for, and to draw from His grace in the past confidence for present and future. May He restore you to perfect health and preserve you to the children. It is well with me, and you may dismiss all anxiety. The beer was so good at Ratisbon and Salzburg that I gave up banting, but here I am beginning again. I take seven baths, and a fortnight from to-day we shall probably, if God will, move on, stay one day in Salzburg, whither the Emperor is likely to come. We shall then, perhaps, get some more light on the political future, and with it on my own further prospects. If anything comes of Biarritz, and you go along, your servant may as well stay behind, since Engel goes with you, but you possibly cannot do without a maid, nor without dresses; for since you have the misfortune to be my wife, the newspapers will surely take notice on occasion of you and your

\* They had been married eighteen years.

† The second son's birthday.

attire. It is the misery of this position that all freedom of private life ceases, and therefore it is I warn you that in Homburg you practise no economies which might be out of that measure for the Prussian Minister-President's wife which the public defines for you, not by your taste or means, but mercilessly by your rank. We are unfortunately *forced* to regard a thousand dollars less than criticism in our appearance, and the part of a modest country housekeeper is no longer permitted you, at least not at the watering-place! . . . Your most faithful V. B.

GASTEIN, *August 14, '65.*

For several days I have found no leisure to send you word. Gr. Blome is back here, and we are hard at work, preserving the peace and patching up the breaches in the structure. Not to seem *too* zealous, I gave a day yesterday to the chase; I think I wrote you how fruitless the first hunt was; this time I at least shot one fawn, but did not even see more in the three hours that I surrendered myself, motionless, to the experiments of many varieties of insects, and the lively murmur of the waterfall below me made me understand the depth of feeling which extorted from somebody before me the wish: "Rivulet, stop thy murmuring." In my chamber, even, this wish is justified day and night; it makes freer breathing to reach a place where the brutal noise of the waterfall is not heard. But, after all, it was a right pretty shot, at an angle across the ravine, dead on the spot, and fell head foremost into the stream, some steeples' lengths under me. My health is good, and I feel much stronger; whether from bathing is hard to say; the doctors, at least, want to keep cutting me down in number, time, and warmth of baths. What shall I give our

daughter for her birthday? I hope you are attending to that. I will write her a letter. . . . If you stay in Homburg long enough, I hope to make a side trip to you, and to enjoy the comfort of home, for which the Mühlens here do not entirely compensate. God guard you and ours. Best love to our little girl, who is beginning to be terribly old. Farewell.

Your most faithful

V. B.

BADEN, *September 1, '65.*

MY BELOVED HEART,—I reached here day before yesterday morning, slept till half past twelve, then much work, dinner with the King, a long address, in the evening a quartette at Flemming's with Joachim, who really strokes his fiddle with amazing skill. Yesterday on the race-course; many acquaintances whom I could not readily name.

September begins with rain; two-thirds of the year gone since we have become accustomed to write 65. Princelinesses abound here. At four Marussa\* wishes to see me; she is said now to be very handsome. Two Lucca pictures come next. We both look stout and like very good children. The King means to leave here on the 5th, undecided yet which way, Coburg or Coblenz, on account of Queen Victoria, whom he wants to meet. In any case I hope to pass through Frankfort the 5th or 6th; whether I can be in Homburg, and how long, will have to be determined—not longer than one day anyhow, since I must be in Berlin with the King.

It rains very thoroughly and prospectively long. Loving greetings to Marie and both boys.

Your most faithful

V. B.

\* Princess of Baden.

SICHROW, *July 1, '66.*

MY BELOVED HEART,—We started to-day from Reichenberg, have just reached here, still uncertain whether we stay one night here or in Turnau. The whole journey was one of danger, and I am glad to have no responsibility for it. Yesterday the Austrians, if they had sent cavalry from Leitmeritz, might have captured the King and all of us. Poor Carl, the driver, has just had a terrible fall, with the red mare that ran away with him. He was taken at first for dead. He lies in the hospital here at Sichrow, in the next village. Kurt is to come for him. We meet prisoners everywhere; there appear to be already more than 15,000, by the reports received here. Jitschin was taken by us yesterday with the bayonet, the Frankfort division, Gen. Tümping severely wounded in the thigh, not fatally. The heat frightful, the bringing of supplies difficult. Our troops suffer from fatigue and hunger. In the country to this point few marks of the war save trodden fields of grain. The people are not afraid of the soldiers, but stand with wife and child in Sunday dress before the doors and stare in wonder. In Trautenau the inhabitants murdered twenty unarmed stragglers of ours, who had stayed behind the van when their regiment marched through. The guilty ones are in Glogau before a court-martial. At Münchengratz the proprietor of a brewery enticed twenty-six of our soldiers into a cellar of spirits, made them drunk, set it on fire. The brewery belonged to a convent. Aside from such things, we hear less news here than in Berlin. This castle, very imposing, belongs to Prince Rohan, whom I used to meet every year at Gastein.

Farewell. Warm love to the children and our guests.  
 God guard you all. Your most faithful V. B.

JITSCHIN (not GITSCHIN), *July 2, '66.*

Just arrived here from Sichrow; the battle-field on the way was full of corpses, horses, arms. Our victories are far greater than we thought; it seems that we already have more than 15,000 prisoners, and the Austrian loss in killed and wounded is reported still higher, about 20,000. Two of their corps are destroyed, several regiments annihilated to the last man. I have hitherto seen many more Austrian prisoners than Prussian soldiers. Send me constantly by the couriers cigars, as many as one thousand each time if you can, price twenty rix-dollars, for the hospitals. All the wounded ask me for them. Also either by collections or from our own means subscribe for some dozens of copies of the *Kreuz Zeitung* for the hospitals—for example, that in Reichenberg; for the places of the other hospitals have inquiry made at the War Office. What is Clermont-Tonnerre doing? Isn't he coming? I have no mail yet.

Send me, besides, a revolver of large caliber, a saddle-pistol. Carl, the coachman, is better; he will probably suffer no permanent injury, but will be unfit for service for some time. Carl B.\* deserves much praise, the active centre of our travelling household.

Best love. Send me a French novel to read, but only one at a time. God protect you.

Your most faithful

v. B.

This moment comes your letter with the Homburg enclosure: a thousand thanks. I can feel with you the loneliness of your setting out! Here, in the bustle, there can be no sense of the situation, or at most only at night in bed.

\*Bismarck-Bohlen.

HOHENMAUTH, Monday, *September 7*, '66.

Do you remember, sweetheart, how we passed through here nineteen years ago, on the way from Prague to Vienna? No mirror showed the future then, nor in 1852, when I went over this railway with good Lynar. How strangely romantic are God's ways! We are doing well, in spite of Napoleon; if we are not unmeasured in our claims and do not imagine we have conquered the world, we shall achieve a peace that is worth the trouble. But we are as easily intoxicated as disheartened, and it is my thankless part to pour water into the foaming wine, and to insist that we do not live alone in Europe, but with three other powers which hate and envy us. The Austrians hold position in Moravia, and we are bold enough to announce our headquarters for to-morrow at the point where they are now. Prisoners still keep passing in, and cannon, one hundred and eighty from the 3d to to-day. If they bring up their southern army, we shall, with God's gracious help, defeat it too; confidence is universal. Our people are ready to embrace one another, every man so deadly in earnest, calm, obedient, orderly, with empty stomach, soaked clothes, wet camp, little sleep, shoe-soles dropping off, kindly to all, no sacking or burning, paying what they can and eating mouldy bread. There must surely be a solid basis of fear of God in the common soldier of our army, or all this could not be. News of our friends is hard to get; we lie miles apart from one another, none knowing where the other is, and nobody to send—that is, men might be had, but no horses. For four days I have had search made for Philip,\* who was slightly wounded by a lance-thrust in the head, as Gerhard† wrote me, but I can't find

\* Von Bismarck, the oldest nephew.

† Von Thadden, commanding a squadron in the First Dragoon Guards.



out where he is, and we have now come thirty-seven miles farther. The King exposed himself greatly on the 3d, and it was well I was present, for all the warnings of others had no effect, and no one would have dared to talk so sharply to him as I allowed myself to do on the last occasion, which gave support to my words, when a knot of ten cuirassiers and fifteen horses of the Sixth Cuirassier Regiment rushed confusedly by us, all in blood, and the shells whizzed around most disagreeably close to the King. He cannot yet forgive me for having blocked for him the pleasure of being hit. "At the spot where I was forced by order of the supreme authority to run away," were his words only yesterday, pointing his finger angrily at me. But I like it better so than if he were excessively cautious. He was full of enthusiasm over his troops, and justly so rapt that he seemed to take no notice of the din and fighting close to him, calm and composed as at the Kreuzberg, and constantly meeting battalions that he must thank with "Good-evening, grenadiers," till we were actually by this trifling brought under fire again. But he has had to hear so much of this that he will stop it for the future, and you may feel quite easy; indeed, I hardly believe there will be another real battle.

When you have of anybody *no* word whatever, you may assume with confidence that he is alive and well; for if acquaintances are wounded, it is always known at latest in twenty-four hours. We have not come across Herwarth and Steinmetz at all, nor has the King. Schreck, too, I have not seen, but I know they are well. Gerhard keeps quietly at the head of his squadron, with his arm in a sling. Farewell—I must to business.

Your faithfulest

V. B.

THE LOVE LETTERS OF BISMARCK [AUG. '66

ZWITTAU, MORAVIA, *July 11, '66.*

DEAR HEART,—I have no inkstand, all of them being in use; but for the rest I get on well, after a good sleep on a camp bed with air mattress; roused at eight by a letter from you. I went to bed at eleven. At Königgrätz I rode the big sandy thirteen hours in the saddle without feeding him. He bore it very well, did not shy at shots nor at corpses, cropped standing grain and plum-leaves with zest at the most trying moments, and kept up an easy gait to the last, when I was more tired than the horse. My first bivouac for the night was on the street pavement of Horic, with no straw, but helped by a carriage cushion. It was full of wounded; the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg found me and shared his chamber with me, Reuss, and two adjutants, and the rain made this very welcome to me. About the King and the shells, I have written you already. All the generals had a superstition that they, as soldiers, must not speak to the King of danger, and always sent me off to him, though I am a major, too. They did not venture to speak to his reckless Majesty in the serious tone which at last was effectual. Now at last he is grateful to me for it, and his sharp words, "How you drove me off the first time," etc., are an acknowledgment that I was right. Nobody knew the region, the King had no guide, but rode right on at random, till I obtruded myself to show the way. . . . Farewell, my heart. I must go to the King.

Your most faithful

V. B.

PRAGUE, *August 3, 1866.*

MY DEAR HEART,— . . . In a few days it will be nineteen years since we saw all this together. How much that is amazing had to occur, in order to bring me thus

again to the same place, without Bernets. . . . A great complication in the ministry on the speech from the throne; Lippe takes the lead in heavy debate against me on the conservative side, and Hans Kleist has written me a provoking letter. All the petty folk have too little to do, see nothing beyond their own noses, and practise their skill in swimming on the tempestuous wave of phrases. We have done with the enemy, but our friends! They all have blinding flaps before their eyes, and see but one spot in the world.

Farewell, my dear. Here are people and papers. Hearty  
love. Your most faithful V. B.

BERLIN, Tuesday Evening.

(Postmark, *December 7, 1869.*)

*To the Countess von Bismarck-Schönhausen, Bonn, at the  
Star :*

MY DEAR HEART,—I am glad to hear from Keudell that you get on well under the circumstances; I only apprehend lest the reaction will be severe on your strength, when the strain is over. Of the poor weak boy I can find little that is assuring in your reports, though still my reliance on God's help is firm. How recklessly must they have neglected him! Greet my beloved youngster heartily, and keep him right quiet; he will still be patient and weak, but if his strength, with God's help, begins to return, great caution will be needed to keep him from presuming on it.

I dined with Roon on Sunday, and yesterday was with him at Gütergotz, where he has built himself a very imposing château. I don't want to take you there, or you would have nothing to do with the Varzin house. He builds and plants on a huge scale, but he gets no rents.

THE LOVE LETTERS OF BISMARCK [DEC.'69

Yesterday I dined at Malle's, to-day at Roon's again. Have no anxiety, I am very prudent. I have slept well; the first night like the dead, ten hours, and then woke with the impression that I had just lain down. May you have many a night like it; I am much afraid you waste yourself in anxiety and watching. I have seen the King, but did not engage in the service. If I do not go to Bonn, a question I shall not decide till after Marie comes, I do not really know whither. Here I cannot live incognito; everybody has left Varzin, and I have no liking to go abroad. Malle wished to go with me to Kröchlendorf. I might go hunting, but till I have trustworthy assurance from Bonn, do not like to accept any invitation. Love to the dear children, comfort H., keep him quietly patient, and spare yourself. No telegram to-day?

Your  
v. B.

BERLIN, *December* 13, 1869.

MY DARLING,—God be thanked that your letters are of comforting tenor. The retiring disease still rises and falls perhaps, but on the whole keeps on the ebb, and through your accounts of the situation there breaks now and then a comforting bit of humor, which indicates that the spirit of joyful hope is uppermost in your heart. Poor Thile, alas! has suffered what threatened us, and worse; he had but one child, the son who stood with the Uhlans at Perleberg, and has just received a telegram announcing his death by apoplexy. He had suffered from epilepsy before, but was thought to be cured.

With all Herbert's good prospects, I cannot yet but fear that he will not be fit to travel at Christmas. Will it suit you if we keep the holiday together in Bonn, or is the poor boy still so weak that it would be inadvisable? Write

me, without mistaken consideration for me, what you think. The journey would not hurt me; there must be lodgings to be found there, so that Herbert will not be disturbed. I cherish the idea of transplanting both the boys hither, as soon as the recovery, with God's help, has gone far enough. Of course, they are in God's hand anywhere, but after this time of anxiety you will still be uneasy if they stay out of your sight, and you will regard Bonn in particular with less confidence than before, though you are in all seriousness a brave and God-gifted lady; in fact, even more so in the actual presence of calamity than when fancy still gives fear full play. Write me your opinion. As soon as I am a little calmer, I will go for some days to Barby to hunt, taking Marie thither perhaps Saturday or Monday. If we then go for the holiday to Bonn, we might make our journey direct from there without entering Berlin again; if you think it better that the invalid's quiet still remain unbroken, write me so without reserve, and we must this time divide the Christmas-tree, half here, the other half at Schnitz's. If Herbert could leave his room by that time, there might be a place near Bonn—Rolandseck, Honnef, or the like—where we could spend a few days quietly together. Hearty greetings to both boys, over whose Christmas Marie is splitting her head.

Your

V. B.

MAINZ, August 6, '70.

*To Count H. Bismarck:*

MY BELOVED BOY,—Hearty thanks for your letter of two days since, received to-day; where this will find you, I know not. We go with the King to-morrow morning to the border; I should like to meet there the dear blue colors. The beginning, under God's blessing, is good;

would it might keep so to the end. From Weissenbourg, four hundred French prisoners came through here to-day, and four hundred through Darmstadt. At Saarbrück to-day the retreating marauders, who fired this unfortified town in their wantonness, were overtaken by Göben, and (Frossard's corps) utterly routed. Within a few days the same, with God's help, will be the case with the main army. I have good news of your mother, only throw in the mail frequent letters for her, when you can. I hope she will soon go to Nauheim.

Hearty love to Bill, and join me and your mother in prayer that God will reunite us all in health, but, above all, that He will give us victory of His grace.

Faithfully, your father, V. BISMARCK.

Should either of you be wounded, telegraph me at the King's headquarters as quickly as you can. But not to your mother first.

VENDRESSE, *September 3, 1870.*

*To Mrs. von Bismarck :*

MY DEAR HEART,—Day before yesterday I left my quarters here before dawn, but came back to-day, and have meanwhile been through the great battle of Sedan on the 1st, in which we took some thirty thousand prisoners, and shut the remainder of the French army, which we had chased ever since Bar-le-Duc, into the fortress, where they had to surrender, with the Emperor, as prisoners of war. At five yesterday morning, after I had discussed the terms of capitulation with Moltke and the French generals till one o'clock, General Reille, whom I know, called me up to say that Napoleon wished to speak with me. Without washing or breakfast, I rode

towards Sedan, found the Emperor in an open carriage with three adjutants, and three more at hand in the saddle, on the main road before Sedan. I dismounted, saluted him as politely as in the Tuileries, and asked his commands. He desired to see the King. I told him, as was true, that his Majesty's quarters were fourteen miles away, at the place where I am writing now. Upon his question, whither he should betake himself, I offered him, since I was unfamiliar with the region, my quarters in Donchery, a village on the Maas close to Sedan; he accepted them, and drove, escorted by his six Frenchmen, by me; and by Carl, who meanwhile had ridden after me, through the lovely morning, towards our lines. He was distressed before reaching the place, because of the possible crowds, and asked me if he might not stop at a lonely workman's house on the road. I had it examined by Carl, who reported that it was wretched and dirty. "*N'importe,*" said Napoleon, and I mounted with him a narrow, rickety stairway. In a room ten feet square, with a fig-wood table and two rush-bottomed chairs, we sat an hour, the others staying below. A mighty contrast to our last interview, in '67, at the Tuileries. Our conversation was difficult, if I would avoid touching on things which must be painful to those whom God's mighty hand had overthrown. Through Carl, I had officers brought from the city, and Moltke requested to come. We then sent out one of the first to reconnoitre, and discovered, a couple of miles off, at Fresnoi's, a little château with a park. Thither I conducted him, with an escort of the Cuirassier body-guards, which was meanwhile brought up, and there we concluded the capitulation with Wimpfen, the French general-in-chief. By its terms, from forty to sixty thousand French—I do not yet know the number



more exactly—become our prisoners, with everything they have. The two preceding days cost France one hundred thousand men and an emperor. He started early this morning, with all his court, horses, and wagons, for Wilhelmshöhe, at Cassel.

It is an event in universal history, a triumph for which we will thank God the Lord in humility, and which is decisive of the war, even though we must continue to prosecute it against headless France.

I must close. With heartfelt joy I have learned to-day from your letter and Marie's, of Herbert's reaching you. I met Bill yesterday, as I telegraphed you, and took him to my arms from his horse before the King's face, while he stood with his limbs rigid. He is entirely well and in high spirits. Hans and Fritz Carl and both the Bülowes I saw with the Second Dragoon guards, well and cheerful.

Farewell, my heart. Kiss the children.

Your

V. B.

GASTEIN, *August 30, '71.*

Happy the man to whom God has given a virtuous wife, who writes him every day. I am delighted that you are well, and that you have come to be three, to whom I hope to add myself as fourth on the 7th or 8th. . . . You see I have enough mental leisure here to devote myself to the unaccustomed work of making plans; but all on the presupposition that the excited Gauls do not worry my little friend Thiers to death, for then I should have to stay with his Majesty and watch which way the hare runs. I do not think that likely, but with such a stupid nation as they are anything is possible. Hearty love to both fat children.

Your most faithful

V. B.

GASTEIN, *September 2, '71.*

MY DARLING,—Your refreshing letter of the 31st, with the postmark Reichenhalle, the morning of the 1st, has come hither uncommonly quick, after I had been four days long without any, which, in view of your usual faithfulness in writing, made me uneasy. The stout quarrellers might also write a line once in a while; it need not be a letter, but just a sign of life. I get on well, only work piles up for me. The King of Greece came to-day, and leaves me **no** time to write; I must breakfast at his Majesty's with the exalted guest; hardly time for the bath. Do not count on me for Gmunden, but rather go there before I come, if, as I presume, you want to see the place and the little lady again. I am sorry Jagow stays away, on Bill's account. But at this season he no doubt finds vagabonds to make friends of on the great routes of travel. Farewell, the bath-house fiddle has already struck up the Grecian national hymn. A right cheerful march movement.

Your  
v. B.

VARZIN, Trinity, *May 26, '72.*

It is distressing that you are gone, and I worry so that I don't know whether I can stand it for four weeks. Perhaps I shall drive to Reinfeld to-morrow with Westphal, but the depressing thing is to come back to the empty house. I was at church with Bucher, then we loafed two hours in the close, dined with Westphal and Wistinghausen, and I have just inspected protected places for young trees for three hours till sunset. Weather and forest are fine, but if unscrupulous doctors, by their pompous pretensions with bathing-cures, break all family ties, then the finest Varzin of all can do me no good. I feel as if all men were

THE LOVE LETTERS OF BISMARCK [OCT. '78

dead, I alone left. I trust you arrived safely; did you forward the letter to his Majesty? Greet my darling urchin, and speedily send one of the youngsters here.

Your

V. B.

(TELEGRAM.)

VARZIN, May 31, '72.

*Princess Bismarck, Soden Spa :*

I am doing as well as any childless straw-widower in good weather can.

BISMARCK.

FRIEDRICHS, Wednesday.

(Postmark, October 23, '78.)

Hearty thanks for your letter, my dear. I have come here, after a long interval, for my first rest, found my enlarged chamber more comfortable than anything for a long time, slept tolerably, spite of all excuses and strong coffee at ten o'clock. My first meeting with Ti.\* to-day almost frightened me, as a reminder of the chains of office. The air fills the lungs splendidly, like good old wine in comparison with small Berlin beer. In the forest the foliage is rich, autumn coloring prevailing as seen from above, many trees still in summer green from below. I walked an hour in the morning, drove then with Ti. through Bräken, Altenhau, Schöнау, Silk, where I saw the first full barns; lit on Stumm in the forest surveying with huzzars, invited him to dinner, and have just let him go, nine o'clock. Ti. is somewhat chilled; Bill comes to-morrow morning, according to a telegram just received. Tiras and Flora are chasing each other like mad through

\*Tiedemann.

the big rooms in the delight of meeting again, and the curtains with foolish trains on the ground hem in the space. In the ice-cellar for weeks not a piece, because of defective plumbing. The stoves heat well; some of the chimneys still smoke. Horses well; the general impression satisfactory, especially the quieting outlook on the wall built around us! A clear sky with fifty-nine degrees temperature; in short, I should be comfortable if you were with me and no visit expected. Hearty love to Marie and R.

Your most faithful V. B.

VARZIN, Tuesday, *November 18, '79.*

The frosty weather suits me better than what preceded it, only the languor still does not go. "That is good for you,"\* is like a journey afoot, with much standing and resting; but I have probably four weeks left yet for rest. How is it with the grandson? Was it wind? Hearty love to the would-be mother and Rantzan. Adelheid is reading Italian, Herbert is writing close by, Tire† is cracking an enormous bone, and the tea-kettle is singing to all. God be with you and Marie.

Your faithfulest V. B.

KISSINGEN, *July 12, '81.*

*To the Princess von Bismarck, Kreuth, Upper Bavaria:*

BELOVED HEART,—God be thanked for all the good tidings from you; may the distress of separation bring rich fruit of health. It is very empty here, in the house and outside in walks and drives; even Tiras feels it, and

\* Words cut in the bark of a tree at Varzin.

† Tiras.

THE LOVE LETTERS OF BISMARCK [JULY, '81

whines inquiringly in the mornings why Herbert comes and not you. We drive every evening, to get out in the open, bravely and long, and then before eleven I go to bed, and yet after a good night's sleep struggle in vain to get up at nine. The ideal distribution of the day is even yet not attained. We have a few guests at dinner every day: yesterday Seydewitz, Mischke (adjutant to the Crown Prince), and Kracht; to-day Mühler (on business, unfortunately), and the good Mrs. Wallenberg, who not long ago dined at our home with Ohlendorf; she is always sociable and agreeable. I now bathe only every other day, and drink only two glasses, because favorable symptoms indicated that it was enough. After a while I will bathe oftener. Pains gradually diminishing, day by day, but they do not yet leave me entirely at peace, since I was on the fortifications at Strasburg till about three o'clock. Herbert, for similar reasons, is to drink Rakoczy too, and to diet. I have persuaded Elise\* to stay till Thursday; she is free from pain, but walks stiff and lame, so that she would bring disgrace on your façade. To-day seventy-nine degrees in the shade, moderate for Kreuth, here very warm. God bless you. Hearty love to Bill and the ladies.

Your

V. B.

KISSINGEN, *July* 28, '81.

MY BELOVED HEART,—With joy I have received your telegram to-day, and join in thanks to God for all the grace that has been shown us in these thirty-four years. The very fact that His mercy has preserved us and all our family till now, and, as I firmly trust, will preserve

\* Chambermaid.

us still, is a special and not common favor, and how wonderfully Has his guardian hand repeatedly worked for each of us five. I have had much anxiety, toil, and trouble, but in the retrospect of a third of a century my heart overflows in humble gratitude, with the confession that it has been well with me, beyond all desert and hope. May God's grace continue with us. In 1847 it was warmer than now; early this morning it was only fifty-two degrees; is now fifty-seven degrees. At noon Mrs. Wallenberg and Schlözer were with us, and we ate a hare from Barby; then I drove with Herbert to the bridge over the railway, and we walked back to Arnshausen, with the view over the blue Rhön. Under the treatment I continue to improve, though I have days of pain now and then; without them the mischief cannot be extirpated, and none of them is as bad as formerly. To-day I have been almost wholly free, and besides sleep and appetite are in excellent order. I go to bed earlier every day (at ten thirty), and to-day I drank Rakoczy at nine o'clock. I take deep delight in all good news from you, and it will be still nicer when we are once both together again in rugged health. Much love to aunty and Madame Lully.\*

From your most faithful                      v. B.

ROGATE, 84, FRIEDRICHSRUHE.

(Postmark, May 18, 1884.)

*To the Princess von Bismarck, Berlin, W.:*

Would you may have slept, my heart, as well as I have here; it was seventy-two degrees when I awoke, now it is eighty-four degrees in the shade; but I wish you better

\*Mrs. von Stülpnagel.

ink when you write; this runs out at the first touch, and is all gone after three words. I therefore take a pencil. It is very fine here, although the alders are three days behind those in Berlin, and the oaks six. The thorn-roses are just as in Berlin, and the oaks in Silk the same. No nightingales, but countless grasshoppers, starlings, and the like, especially the cuckoo, which I had not yet heard in Berlin. I asked him, how much longer? The flatterer answered, twelve, but the last two only faintly. The mill-race is a veritable cataract, but makes a fine appearance for the eye. The natural swamp there used to be, mould and water mixed, has been pushed some hundred yards upward, by art and expenditure, and the clear water is much enlarged. The mill grinds, but lets the rain through. I went in a carriage with Bill to Silk, where it is charming, but the stand of rye is rather thin, and the barley wants more rain; the farm-hand complained of the "big drought." The fish-ponds have become very fine; the new plantings again too deep in the ground! But the tilled field is charming. May God heal you speedily! Love to Mary and aunty.

Your            v. B.

FRIEDRICHSRUHE, *December 22, '86.*

*To the Princess von Bismarck:*

MY DEAR HEART,—The disturbance and the prolonged separation are, indeed, very distressing, but much more so is your chill. Our festival can be postponed at pleasure, but must not override your health. We may celebrate it in two or three days, or, as the French do, at New Year's Day, but do me the favor not to drive through the winter air before you are entirely well again. What



can all festivities or gifts do for me, if you fall sick? Misery then takes the place of joy, and no candle-lighting is of any help against it. I earnestly beg you *not* to drive to-morrow and next day (24th); we certainly will not celebrate on Christmas Eve this time. Don't be obstinate; you will make me sick if you are, and apart from that will get stalled in the snow. It is snowing here all that the sky has to send. Everything else is well, and I in particular, but I shall fall sick with anxiety for you if I am not sure that you stay quietly in your warm room. Please telegraph me at once that you will do so, or I shall have no peace. Abundant love to all the children.

Your most faithful V. B.

VARZIN, *July 15, '87.*

MY DEAR HEART, — Thanks for your letter of this morning. I have been out in the oppressive heat all day; an early walk over the Park and the Richtberg, then a drive with Rantzau to Wisdow; saw Laura down with her confinement; back by the beeches; dined not till half past seven with Adelheid, and now, just going to bed, write you this loving word: May God grant us as a recompense for the painful separation rich blessing in health. We shall hope for the compensation in the winter, and at least will not have it to say of every indisposition, this comes from your wilfulness in the summer. In assured prospect of happy reunion,

Your most faithful, but, at the moment, weary,  
V. B.

It is raining hard. The trees have suffered in their foliage from May-bugs and lack of warmth. Rain has

THE LOVE LETTERS OF BISMARCK [JULY, '88

been plenty. The fields look well; the summer's harvest better than at Schönau. Much love to H. and Marie.

(TELEGRAM.)

VARZIN, May 26, '88.

Without horses or wife, I can't bear it here longer. We return to-morrow.

V. BISMARCK.

FRIEDRICHSRUHE, July 16, 1888.

*To the Princess von Bismarck, Homburg-on-the-Height:*

MY DEAR HEART,—I salute your happy arrival at Homburg with a few lines in my own hand, that you may have sure proof that I am well. Last night, as often as I turned over, I had to keep thinking how we are flung around the world: you rolling through the night on the railway in Thuringia, Herbert on the lake between Arcona and Bornholm, Marie in Berlin, Bill in Hanau, we here in the forest. Why can we not be together? To many travel is the highest enjoyment, to us a burden. Every day till now we two have dined alone, not even Lange once with us. I do not want to see strangers, much as I miss my own folk when they are not with me. Since this morning the weather is warm, the sun out too; it had been till then fifty or fifty-five degrees, and rain, but early this morning, while Kuno was hunting (to no purpose), he saw it down to thirty-nine degrees; yet at nine, when I rose, it was sixty-eight degrees. The forest is as fine as it can be; the grain-fields poor, except potatoes and oats, the hay soaked, wherever it does not still stand thick, adorning the meadow and awaiting the scythe. There is no lack of summer guests, spite of the cold, in all

the small houses. They make the forest unsafe. I spend the whole day under the sky, walking, riding, driving, and have at least six hours of open air every day for one in Berlin. Nor do I so quickly get tired here on horse-back or on foot. I do no work, on principle, when in the house. I read novels, reclining by the fire. If this does no good—

God be with you and strengthen you, so that you may come back robust and in spirits. Hearty love to aunty.

Your

V. B.

FRIEDRICHSRUHE, August 22, '89.

*To the Princess von Bismarck, Homburg-on-the-Height :*

MY DEAR HEART,—Many thanks for your letter, which assures me you are well housed. Our separation is a misfortune which we will not make harder for each other by complaints. I must comfort myself here in company with Rottenburg, who is just as lonely, and Marie will soon have to part with her Cuno, too. Yesterday we celebrated her day and Christian's with many bouquets and with the foaming Moselle, which she likes. I brought her the only Niel rose I could find, and a huge garland, which I gathered behind the castle, of the splendidly colored leafage of the Ohe heath. When I went to bed, after ten, Christian was still playing, not yet tired, with leaden soldiers, a helmet on his head, as their commander. But I have had to leave poor Tiras in the veterinary school. He could not be transported, and there is little succor here for sick dogs—only horses and kine are known to the veterinary practitioners. I have still all along been somewhat anxious for the intrusive black calf's head, with his good-humored awkwardness.

THE LOVE LETTERS OF BISMARCK [Aug. '89]

Tiras hardly knows me any more; he has not grown any. The forest is charming in its oaks; the beeches are in places eaten bare by caterpillars, not around the house, but farther in the forest, and are generally poor in foliage. At Schönaue I saw at least good lupines, huge seradels, and potatoes ninety hundredweight to the acre, twice as much as last year; besides, the rye harvest is good, but oats, barley, and clover have turned out very poorly. There has been nothing else in my life here; I am just out of the bath, and am now going to Rott's lecture; on the way I want to stop at the desk at least to send you a word of love, wish you good weather, and report that all is well except as to the lame puppy. Please give much love to Merly,\* and sincere remembrances to all you see fit.

Your

v. B.

\*Mrs. Mary Meister.

THE END



# THE BROWNING LETTERS

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